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IS ABOUT TO EXPLODE

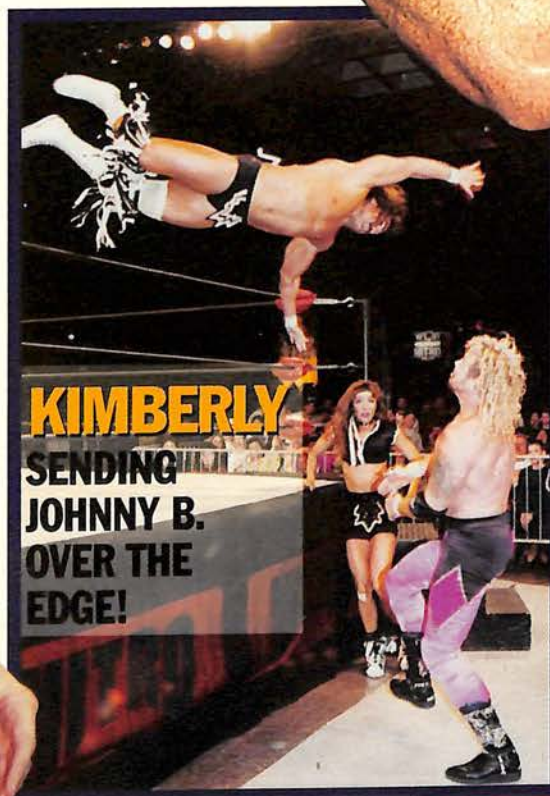
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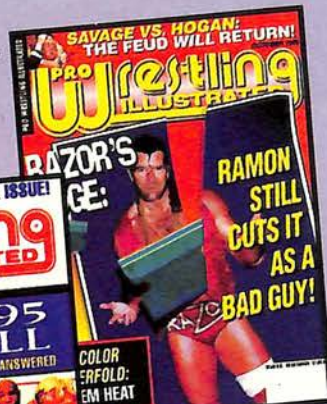
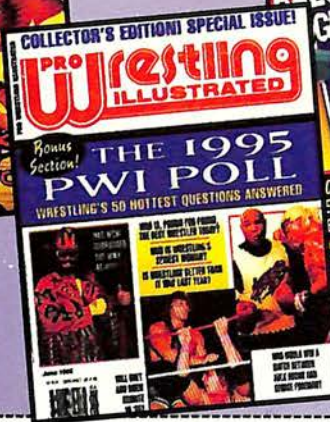
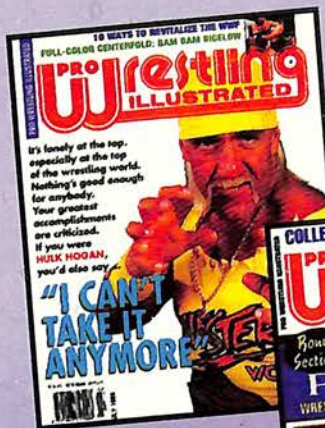
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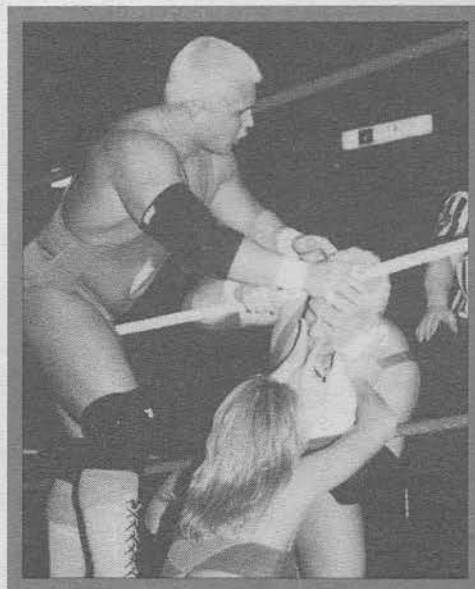
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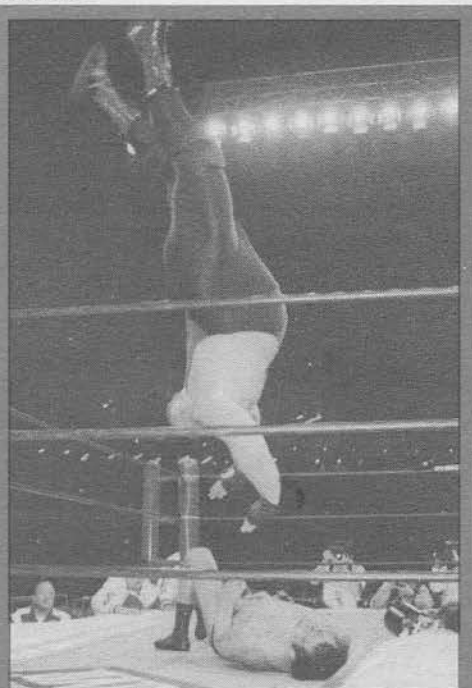
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Next issue on sale June 4, 1996

# YOUR Letters

## SO-CALLED FRIENDS

The April 1996 cover story, "Can't We All Just Get Along?" pretty much tells you all you need to know about the four biggest egos in wrestling today. Just look at the people involved. Hulk Hogan is the biggest prima donna in the sport. Lex Luger is definitely looking out for himself and no one else. Sting is the most gullible

With these four men at each others' throats because of their egos, it's no wonder that Ric Flair is the WCW World champion.

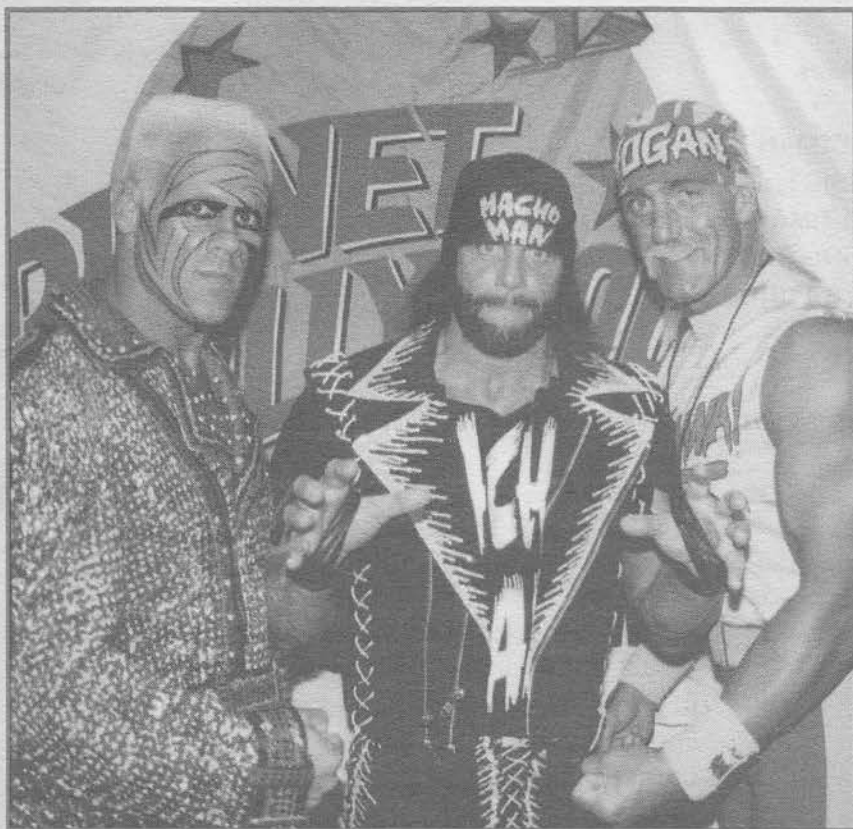
BRUCE GRAY  
Orlando, FL

I always knew that there was more to Hulk Hogan, Randy Savage, Lex Luger, and Sting's relationship with each other than

his career wondering which friend will turn against him next that he is oblivious to it now.

I think Sting may be the first one to crack from the pressure. He is taking a lot of criticism from Hogan and Savage about his friendship with Luger, and, at the same time, he's being bad-mouthed by Luger for maintaining a friendship with Hogan and Savage. I think he'll soon grow tired of his friends running his life and take matters into his own hands. Unfortunately, I think that when Sting does stand up for himself, his fans may desert him.

MARGARET XAVIER  
Morgantown, WV



Sting, Randy Savage, and Hulk Hogan ... do we know yet if they're all getting along? Several of our readers are tired of seeing WCW's top fan favorites bickering and acting so paranoid.

man in wrestling. He is too quick to trust former enemies, and he usually gets burned for it. Randy Savage has some gall calling everybody jealous of him, because he has a very checkered past himself.

just friendship, but I never expected them all to be so paranoid. Surprisingly, Hogan seems to be the most mentally stable of the four. I always figured he'd be the one to be the most paranoid, but I guess he has spent so much of

## ALMANAC ATTACK

The wait is over! I finally got my copy of the *Pro Wrestling Illustrated's 1996 Wrestling Almanac And Book Of Facts* from my local newsstand, and I must say that it was well worth the wait! The book is crammed with information. I particularly enjoyed the "Year-By-Year" section, which detailed events in wrestling history all the way back to 1845.

This book is the best thing to happen to wrestling in a long time. Thanks.

HOLLY OGELTHORPE  
Raleigh, NC

## IGNORING THE FANS

I believe the WCW-WWF war is not good for professional wrestling. Most wrestling fans see the war as childish and ridiculous.

On one side, you have the WWF, which has needed an influx of new talent to take it to another level. The WWF's vendetta against Ted Turner is infantile. I



don't think the WWF will solve anything by badmouthing the association that is virtually stomping it into the ground.

On the other side, you have WCW and its extraordinary amount of talent. WCW seems to have everything going its way, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that WCW seems a little bitter over losing talent like Big Van Vader and Steve Austin to the WWF.

This whole war is just ridiculous. I think WCW and the WWF should be more worried about the fans. I realize that the fans need to understand the other aspects of the sport, but I also think the corporate leaders of WCW and the WWF need to understand the needs of their loyal fans. If not for these loyal fans, wrestling would be just a bunch of men throwing each other around in a ring. Without the fans, professional wrestling is nothing.

JOHNNIE ADAMS JR.  
Washington, NC

## NO KIDDING, LAWLER

What is going on with Jerry Lawler? He has had a great

career in which he has won many titles throughout the United States. He has defeated some of the greatest wrestlers in the sport when they were in their prime. Why is a man with this great performance record wasting his time being the comedy whipping boy for every other wrestler in the WWF? I know that long-time Lawler fans, especially me, would like to see the real "King" stop joking around so much and wrestle like he did in his glory days.

JOHN WELLS  
Lawrenceburg, KY

## CORPORATE CRUNCH TIME

Ted DiBiase should just file for corporate bankruptcy already ("If DiBiase Fails With The Kid ... He's A Million-Dollar Bust!" April 1996). He could not make the successful transition from wrestler to manager, and he's just fooling himself if he thinks there's still a chance he could make one of his men a champion. He has had some great talent to work with in the past. Even now, he has great wrestlers like The Kid and "Ring

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Jerry Lawler spends more time talking and interviewing stars such as The Undertaker than he does wrestling in the WWF. Reader John Wells would rather see him in the ring more.



# THE Wrestler

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# WHAT'S

# Happëning

By Bill Apter

**F**ORMER WWF WORLD heavyweight champion **Diesel** has officially notified the WWF that he will be leaving the federation when his contract expires in June. "Big Daddy Cool" has agreed to a three-year deal to wrestle for WCW; his final day as an employee of the WWF will be June 6. There is also speculation that **Razor Ramon**, who was in

the middle of a six-week suspension as we went to press, will wind up in WCW.

"**Psycho**" **Sid Vicious** announced his retirement on a recent edition of the USWA's weekly television show, citing a serious neck injury as the reason for his decision. Sid said that his doctors told him if he reagggravates the injury, he could wind up crippled. He worked as a guest color commentator on a USWA telecast on the day he announced his retirement, and he did so well that he has been asked to return on a semi-regular basis.

"You never know what the future will bring," Sid told me. "Right now, I can't even think about a return to the ring. The broadcast booth feels real good to me, and I think I can be a credit to the broadcasting industry and the USWA."

**Cactus Jack**, who is going under the name **Mankind** in the WWF now, has filed suit against WCW. According to a story in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Cactus is "claiming the company maintained an unsafe working environment that caused his ear to be ripped off during a match in Germany."

The match in ques-

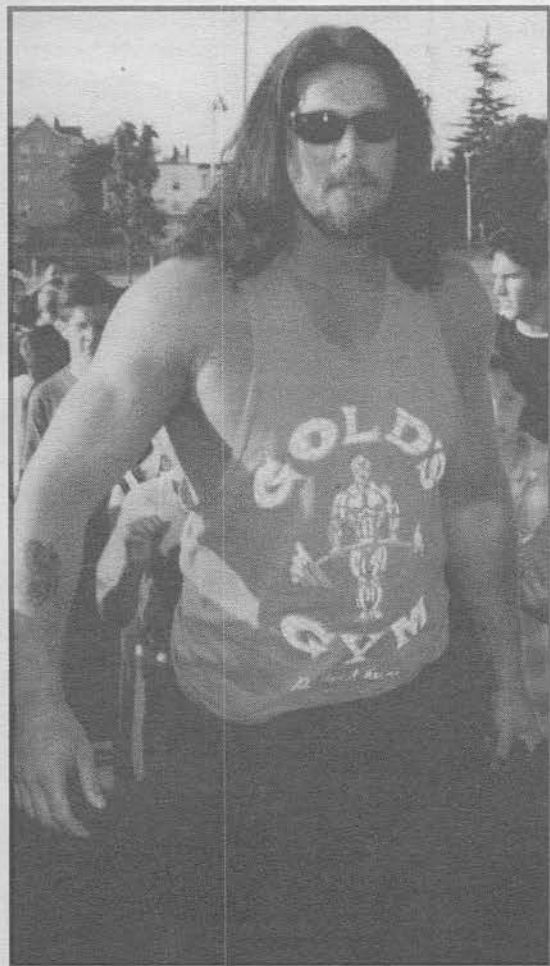
tion was a Cactus-**Big Van Vader** match in 1994. According to the story, the lawsuit, which seeks unspecified damages, says that someone had tightened the ropes before the match, and Jack was thus unable to easily free himself when his head got tangled between two of the strands. No one in WCW would comment on the lawsuit.

With **The Ultimate Warrior** now back in the WWF, you have to wonder if one (or many) of his old and very unsettled feuds will flare up again. The feud I'm most concerned is the one he had with **The Undertaker** a few years ago. Their battles were brutal, and Warrior found himself in an Undertaker bodybag after many of them.

"Hard feelings may still exist somewhere in the universe," Warrior told me. "How much anger remains is not easily calculated at this time. We will come face-to-face, and when we stare into each other's destiny, we will then realize whether we are indeed friend or foe."

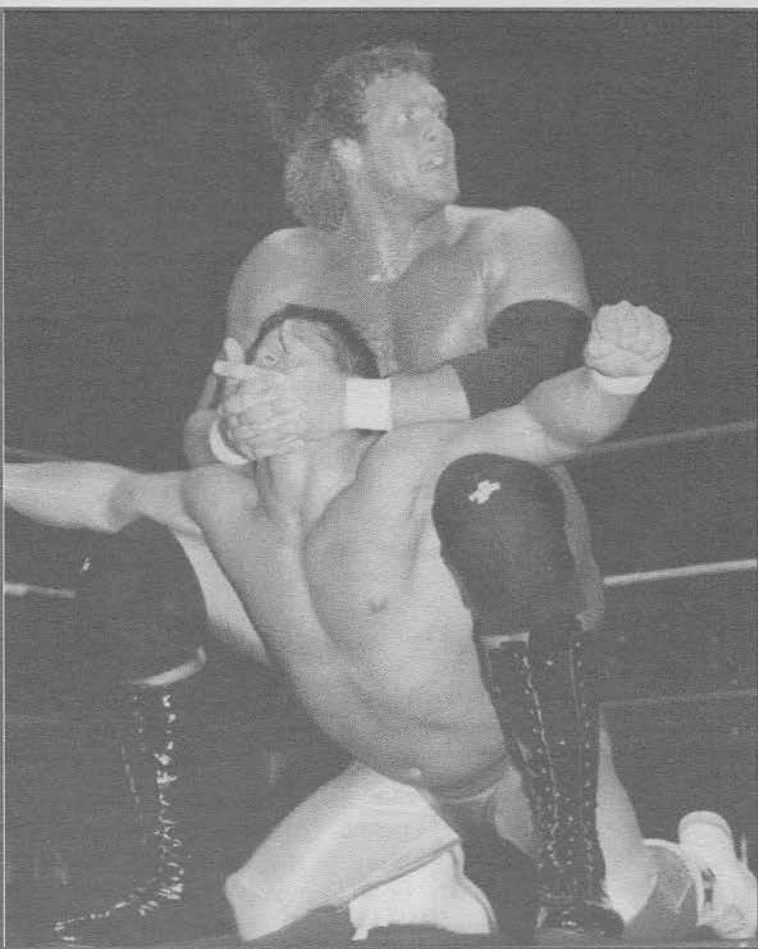
"Oh, yes, there could be a world of hatred to dig up," said **Paul Bearer**, manager of The Undertaker. "Many years of anger have been festering inside my Undertaker. He is not opposed to the Warrior's return, but he warns Warrior that he may see a return to the dark side if he decides to anger Undertaker in any way."

**Jerry Lawler** has won the USWA heavyweight title for the 22nd time. "The King" won the vacant title by beating **King Mabel** in a tournament final in Memphis on March 4. The tournament had to be held

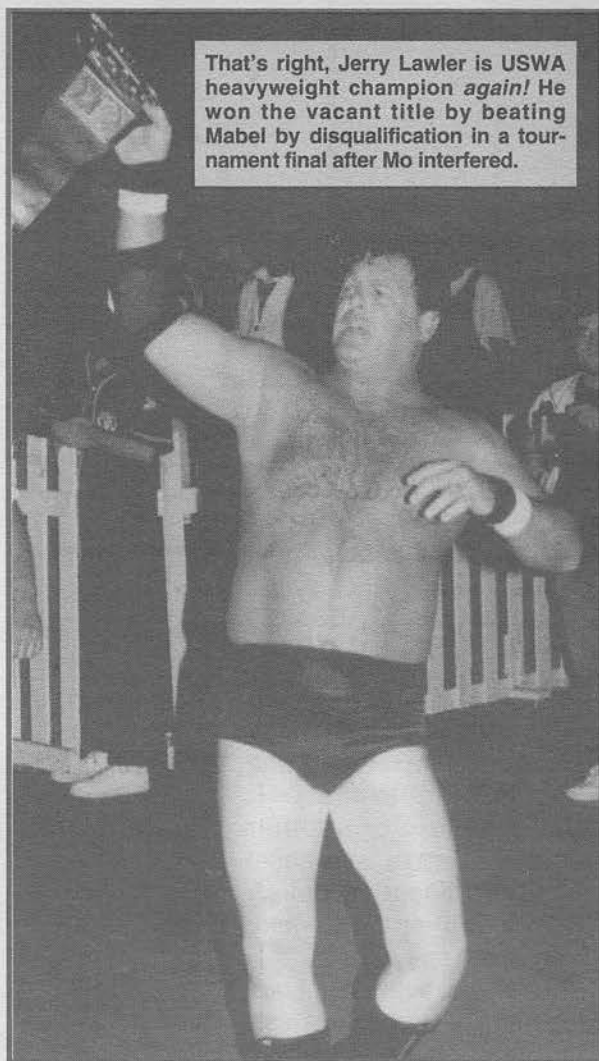


He's packing his bags and heading out ... of the WWF. Diesel informed WWF officials in March that he would be leaving the federation once his contract expires in June. He's expected to start wrestling in WCW soon thereafter.





You won't be seeing this sight anymore. Sid Vicious has announced his retirement from wrestling. He says a neck injury will keep him from competing, but he has been doing some broadcasting work for the USWA.



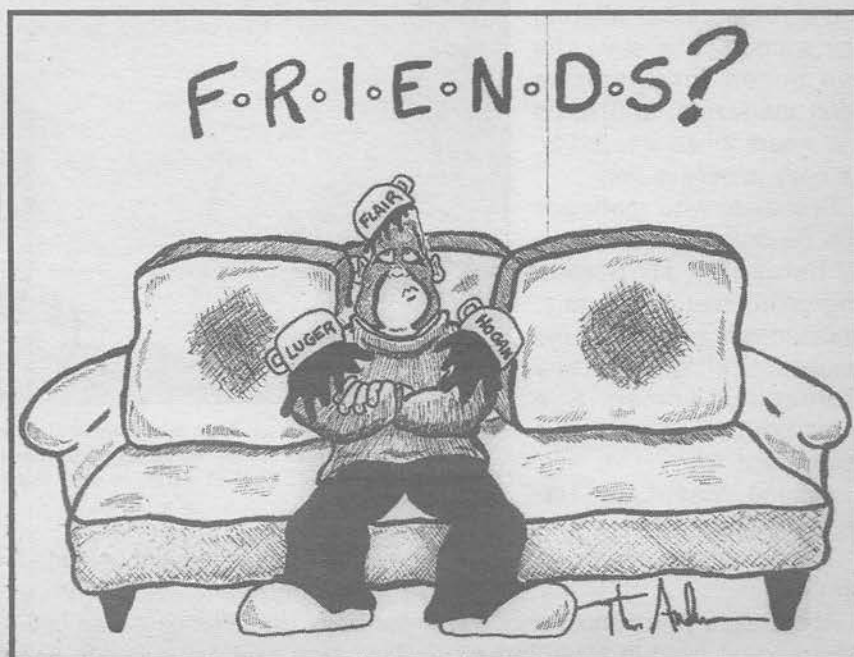
That's right, Jerry Lawler is USWA heavyweight champion *again*! He won the vacant title by beating Mabel by disqualification in a tournament final after Mo interfered.

because **Jeff Jarrett** was stripped of the title after he suffered a debilitating back injury in a match against **Ahmed Johnson** in February. The rules of the tournament dictated that you could advance even if you won matches by disqualification or countout, and Lawler was fortunate that was the case. Only one of his three tournament victories came by pinfall.

Lawler advanced to the semifinals after his match with **Brian Christopher** went to a time-limit draw. Because there had to be a winner in each match, a coin flip was held, and Lawler won it. Finally, after beating **Giant Warrior** in the semifinals, Lawler beat Mabel by disqualification when **Sir Mo** interfered. By the way, Mabel and Mo were scheduled to wrestle each other in the

(Continued on page 52)

## Steve Anderson's View





# NO Holds Barred

with David  
Rosenbaum

**T**HE WOMEN OF Extreme Championship Wrestling. You gotta love them. Stevie

Richards is suing Missy Hyatt for harassment, and unless he gets the O.J. Simpson jury or another group of people with equal ability to suspend belief, ECW's Trial of the Century won't even last a day.

Lady Alexandra has blazing red hair and an interesting assortment of skimpy outfits. That's a very good combination.

Beulah McGillicutty used to get piledriven all the time she's in his corner offering him support. She says she has posed for a certain adult magazine, and when she wears those little skirts, it's easy to believe her.

Francine, who manages The Pit Bulls, pinned Stevie Richards in a six-person dog-collar match recently, which makes her clearly the toughest of ECW's fine crew of beautiful women. She holds her own in the looks department, too.

Kimona Wana-Laya, Raven's new valet.

That's certainly an original name.

About eight years ago, I shot an independent card in New Jersey

and had the good fortune of standing next to Dark Journey for one match. Dark Journey, if you don't

see her beauty, but on that night, I was having no problem. An hour later, I walked into the rulebreakers' locker room, and Abdullah the Butcher was standing there almost totally naked. Obviously, my memories of that evening have been forever corrupted.

Maybe a year or two later, Missy Hyatt and Eddie Gilbert visited our editorial offices in Rockville Centre, New York, for a photo session. I don't know if any of the men in our office even noticed that Gilbert was there. I know I decided right then and there that Missy was the most beautiful woman in wrestling, bar none. No woman has come along since to make me change my mind, either. She looked absolutely incredible that day.

It was also around that time that Linda Dallas, the female wrestler, came up to our offices with Misty Blue Simmes and a few other women wrestlers whose names I have forgotten. Bill Apter and I took them for dinner at an Italian restaurant in the area, and I sat across from Linda, who is well-endowed to say the least. Nonetheless, I

*(Continued on page 54)*



She looks a little different than when we last saw her in WCW, but at least as far as Dave Rosenbaum is concerned, Missy Hyatt, now of ECW, is still the sexiest woman in wrestling.

remember her, was a light-skinned African American beauty with a killer body. Sometimes it was difficult to look past her evil side and



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By  
Andy  
Rodriguez

**W**HEN KEVIN SULLIVAN heard that Hulk Hogan and Sting were attempting to lure The Giant away from the Dungeon of Doom and over to the side of the fan favorites, he insisted that his enemies would fail in their task.

"There is no good inside The Giant," Sullivan said. "He's evil, and that's the way he'll always be!"

Both Hogan and Sting have endured tremendous beatings at the hands of The Giant over the last six months, but that doesn't mean they wouldn't love having him in their camp. And it certainly doesn't mean The Giant will never experience a change of heart.

The history of the sport is dotted with the names of men who were thought to be irredeemably rotten. Superstar Graham stopped beating up on Bruno Sammartino, and the fans opened up their hearts and minds to him. Three years ago, Yokozuna was an America-basher. Now fans love him.

Sure, now it seems The Giant is a pretty horrible person. To hook up with Sullivan, you have to be pretty horrible. However, I think he could easily be convinced to kick his boss in the butt and take a new course.

Sullivan is, if nothing else, an intelligent man. He knows The Giant isn't locked up to him in a lifetime deal. He also knows that if The Giant leaves the Dungeon of Doom, Sullivan's carefully crafted little empire will crumble in two seconds. That has to scare him.

Knowing Sullivan, I'd say it's very likely he's going public with the story about Hogan and Sting in order to rally his troops to his cause. If he can convince his fellow Doomsters that their careers are in danger, they'll fight a lot harder to keep that empire strong.

Giant and Sullivan have had some nasty arguments, but for now, Giant's hatred of Hogan and friends appears to still run deep. Giant would still love to destroy the man who continues to deny him the title of Most Feared Man in WCW.

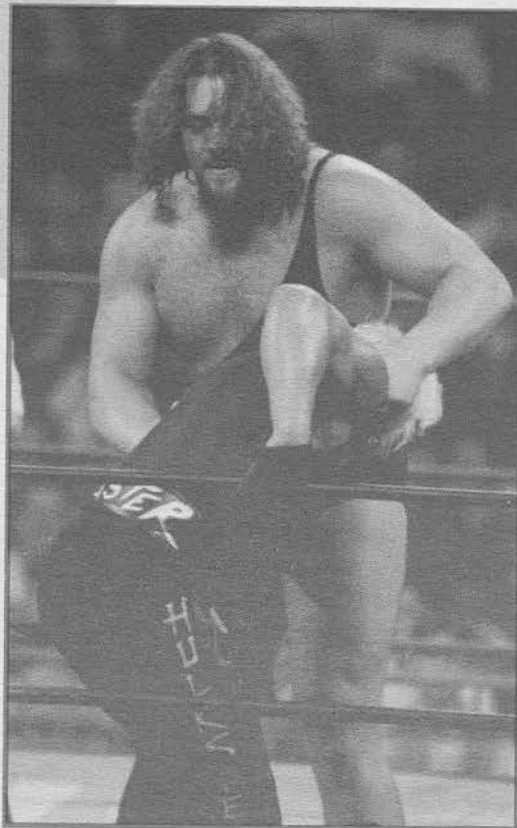
But—and this is a big "but"—Hogan isn't WCW World champion anymore. Ric Flair is. The 7'4" behemoth is as hungry for the World belt as any WCW star is. He doesn't have to be a saint to go after the "Nature Boy," but ties to Flair's pal Sullivan aren't going to help him move any closer to the summit.

Ties to Hogan would increase Giant's chances of wearing championship gold. They'd increase Hogan's chances as well. Without Giant constantly pursuing him, the "Hulkster" would be able to devote more time and energy to regaining the World title from

his dreaded enemy Flair.

It all sounds very intriguing, and depending on the source, a strong Hogan-Giant alliance is either very close to reality, or it's an unbelievable fantasy.

"Hogan has every superstar, wannabe, and has-been breathing down his neck," said Hacksaw Duggan. "He's always on the lookout for allies. Sure, hooking up with Giant is a risk. The guy's a maniac; he's a load of dynamite. But imagine having him on your side. Hulk's a risk-taker, and I really believe he's seriously considering trying to bring The Giant over to our side."



Giant vs. Hogan

The prospect must sicken Sullivan. He's still in good wrestling shape, but he'd rather manage than compete. He has spent several years now trying to create his own version of The Four Horsemen. With The Giant, he's close. Without him, the Dungeon is doomed.

"Sullivan's resourceful," said Bobby Heenan. "He has a skill for drawing dangerous guys toward him. But maniacs like The Giant don't come along very often. And they give you a real chance to make your mark on history."

Considering all the damage Sullivan and his various groups have done over the past 15 years, one hopes The Giant will soon take a "good" look at himself. □



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Stan Hansen won the AWA World title by defeating which champion?

- 1) Rick Martel
- 2) Nick Bockwinkel
- 3) Curt Hennig
- 4) Verne Gagne

The largest crowd ever to witness a pro wrestling show (190,000) was in what city?

- 1) London, England
- 2) Toronto, Ontario
- 3) Pyongyang, North Korea
- 4) Tokyo, Japan

True or False: Hulk Hogan is the only wrestler to appear on the cover of *Sports Illustrated*

- 1) True
- 2) False

Which of the following cities did NOT host a portion of *WrestleMania II*?

- 1) Chicago, Illinois
- 2) Atlantic City, New Jersey
- 3) Uniondale, New York
- 4) Los Angeles, California

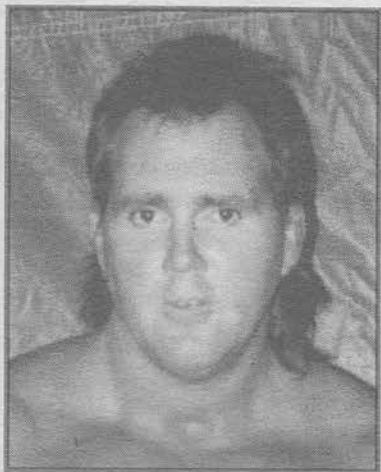


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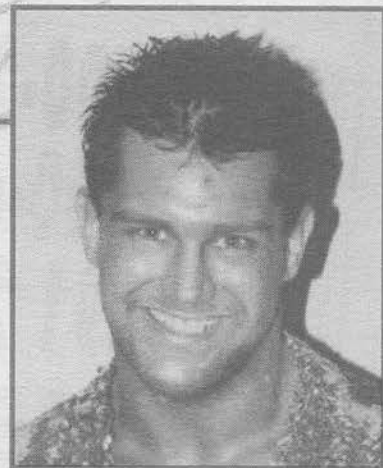
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# THUMBS UP,



**Thumbs Up** to The Booty Man. Who is that man? Well, it's Brutus Beefcake, in case you hadn't figured it out yet. And although he still looks like Brutus Beefcake, he's clearly a changed man in other ways. For one, he has forsaken Kevin Sullivan's Dungeon of Doom and rejoined Hulk Hogan's army. It's about time for Beefcake, who turned against the "Hulkster" in 1994. We're glad Hogan finally found it in his heart to forgive Beefcake, and we're even happier that Beefcake appears to be genuinely remorseful. That counts for something; we're sure he'll be a big help to Hogan in his quest to destroy the Dungeon of Doom.

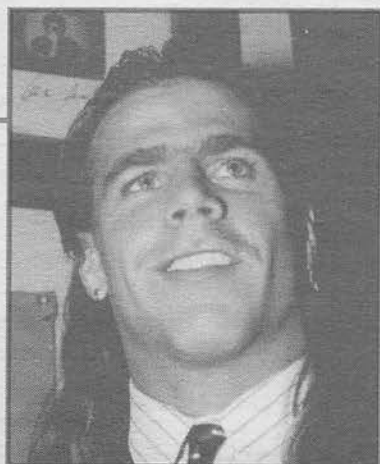
**Thumbs Up** to Brian Christopher. The long-time standout in the USWA defeated Tommy Rich for the Southern title (again) in February and came back a few days later to score an impressive pinfall victory over Tatanka on a WWF card in Memphis. Christopher, who's young, energetic, and talented, would be a perfect addition to the WWF's "New Generation" roster. Christopher is ready to make the next step, and WWF brass should help him up the ladder by making him an offer he can't refuse. It looks as if this young stud is ready to make his move!



**Thumbs Up** to Francine. The ECW manager might find herself in next year's "PWI 500" given that she pinned Stevie Richards in a six-person dog-collar match recently. You could count on one hand the number of female wrestlers who have beaten very good male wrestlers. In this case, Francine defeated a male wrestler who is ranked in the ECW top 10 *after* he dropped her with a superkick early in the match. Not a bad accomplishment for anyone, but a stunning accomplishment for a woman. Who's next ... Missy Hyatt? The Pit Bulls have the right woman on their side. Give Francine an award for Victory of the Year!

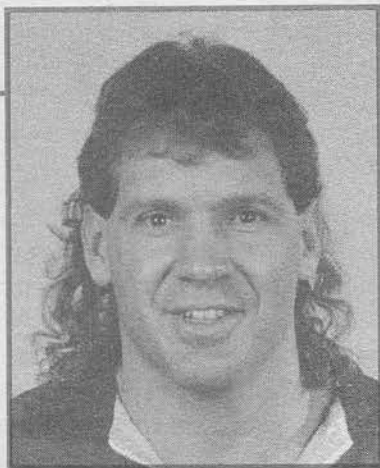


**Thumbs Up** to Shawn Michaels. "The Heartbreak Kid" isn't breaking any hearts lately, other than those of the thousands of female fans who probably wish he'd make a "Heartbreak Pass" at them. Michaels' sportsmanship has been exemplary, and there shouldn't be any doubt in anyone's minds that he's one of the premier wrestlers of this decade. Perhaps the best part about Hulk Hogan's departure from the WWF is that it gave charismatic stars like Michaels a chance to take center stage. And Michaels is certainly no aloof superstar. After most of his victories, he brings a young fan into the ring to celebrate with him.





# THUMB'S Down

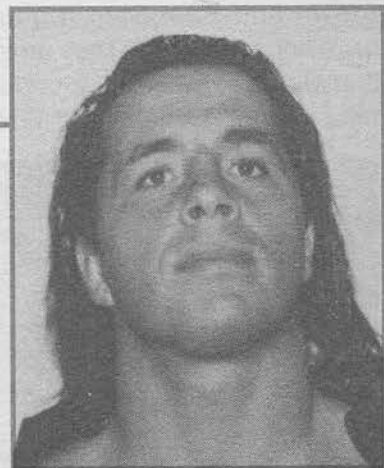


**Thumbs Down** to Tracey Smothers. He used to be the most clean-cut of fan favorites in Smoky Mountain, but that seems like ages ago now. Smothers has a real attitude problem in the USWA. When he and Jesse James Armstrong lost the USWA tag team title recently, Smothers and the team's manager, Brandon Baxter, blamed Armstrong. When Armstrong took exception to something Baxter said, Smothers attacked his partner. Now the two of them are feuding, and Smothers, who's no longer a Southern gentleman, is using every underhanded tactic he knows to try to beat Armstrong. We're rooting for Jesse James in this one.

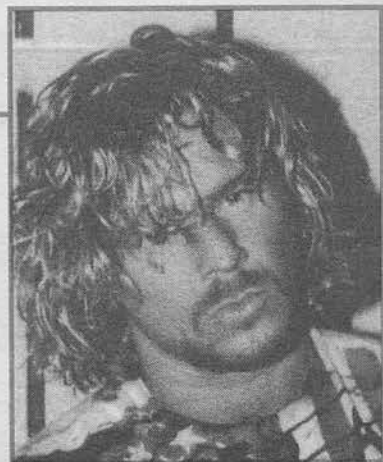
**Thumbs Down** to Bret Hart. Is "The Hitman" turning rulebreaker? We certainly didn't know what to think when we saw Bret pin Shawn Michaels in a lumberjack match on a card in early-March while Owen Hart and Davey Boy Smith held Shawn's legs down. Okay, maybe Bret didn't see what happened while he was getting the three-count, but he found out just seconds after the match ... and he did nothing about it. If Bret were the sportsman that he claims to be, he would have insisted the match be restarted. We can only hope it was just a bad day for him and not a sign of terrible things to come.



**Thumbs Down** to The Undertaker. The man who obviously isn't afraid of the dark spent most of the In Your House VI card under the ring so that he could ambush Diesel by tearing through the mat like a rat. Rat's the operative word here for The Undertaker, who's as obsessed with Diesel as Diesel is with him. It's an unfortunate turn of events for WWF fans, who are watching two outstanding wrestlers waste their time in this heated grudge feud. The action was especially surprising coming from The Undertaker, who has been one of the WWF's most low-key fan favorites. Give it a rest, Undy.



**Thumbs Down** to Brian Pillman. The "loose cannon" formerly of WCW (who may be headed back there soon) hasn't made any friends during his short stay in ECW. In fact, he had to be physically thrown out of the building by security after he showed up at an ECW card in February and began acting in a lewd manner. A few days later, he showed up at another ECW card during a Shane Douglas-Raven match and distracted Douglas enough to cause him to lose the match and a chance to recapture the ECW heavyweight championship. If Pillman keeps up this kind of behavior, no promotion is going to want him.



# CORRESPONDENTS

# Repörrts

**Northampton, PA (Correspondent—Scott Travers):** It has been more than a year since they had last met in the WWF, but the bad feelings between Doink the Clown and Bam Bam Bigelow have not gone away. They proved that was true when they collided on a recent Trans World Wres-

tling Federation card.

Doink came to the ring with a Bam Bam Bigelow doll in his hand, and he tried to wrestle *that* before the real match began. Samoan Afa, who was appointed special guest referee, quickly took the doll away from him. Once the match finally got started, Doink had to

keep a close eye on Johnny Glitter, who was managing Bigelow. Glitter tried to interfere on several occasions. He choked him on the ropes on several occasions.

Doink got his first big break when he was able to drive Bam Bam to the mat with a perfectly executed side suplex. He also applied some armlocks and chinlocks, but they didn't do much damage. Bam Bam, meanwhile, used some forearm smashes and clotheslines to weaken his old rival.

The end came when Doink whipped Bigelow into a corner, then came charging at him. Bam Bam caught him with a boot to the face. A few seconds later, Glitter tried to throw a handful of gold glitter at Doink, but the clown ducked, and he hit Bigelow. Afa saw what happened and gave the win to Doink by disqualification.

In other bouts: Kid Flash pinned Ace Darling ... The Madd Russian beat Bob Starr ... Jack Hammer defeated The Metal Maniac ... Manny Problems beat Raul Ruiz by reverse decision ... Kattrra beat The Nasty Angel ... Hardened Steel beat The Felton Street Gang by disqualification ... Jimmy Snuka beat Bob Backlund.

**Memphis, TN (Correspondent—Frank Miller):** The fans at the Mid-South Coliseum were on their feet when Shawn Michaels  
(Continued on page 56)



Bam Bam Bigelow got a lot of help from manager Johnny Glitter during a recent match with Doink the Clown in Pennsylvania. Glitter caused Doink a lot of pain, but he also got Bam Bam disqualified.



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5. Sabu vs. Bobby Bradley;
6. Sabu vs. Cactus Jack (WILD BLOODBATH FROM MICHIGAN)

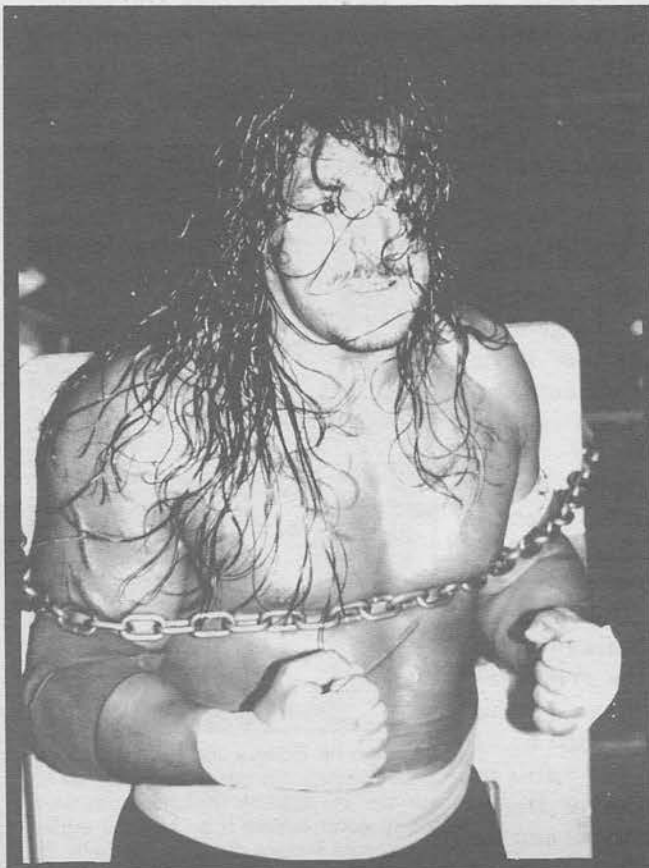
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# YOU Asked Us



Capt. Lou Albano managed Jimmy Snuka on an independent card in Pennsylvania recently, but he says his main mission in wrestling these days is to scout out and help develop new talent.

**Q:** "This question is for Capt. Lou Albano: I notice that you've been managing a lot of different people in a lot of different federations lately. Why don't you settle down and just manage one or two people in one place?" —Chris Gruber, Augusta, ME

**A:** "That's a good question, Chris," said Albano, "a really good question. The Captain is havin' the time of his life, daddy. I'm lean, I'm mean, and I'm always bein' seen. My focus right now, Chris, is on the future of professional wrestling. I spent a lot of good years in the WWF. As you know, I was and still am 'The Guiding Light,' the manager of champions, my friend. But I like to look at young talent. That's why I'm always on the run, goin' from place to

place, town to town. I have friends who tell me I have to check out this great young wrestler, so I'll go and manage him for a match or two and give him some pointers, some confidence. Then I'll go somewhere else and do the same for someone else. I'm tryin' to help shape young careers. Of course every now and then I like to visit old friends like the 'Superfly,' Jimmy Snuka.

But no matter what I'm doin', the Captain is havin' fun, baby!"

**Q:** "I have a question for The Booty Man: Why did it take so long for you to leave the Dungeon of Doom when 'Taskmaster' Kevin Sullivan would badmouth you every time you lost?" —Jose Jimenez, New York, NY

**A:** "I was a spy!" replied Booty. "Sullivan was just too stupid to realize it. He thought The Zodiac was committed to helping him destroy 'Hulkamania'! No way. 'Hulkamania' is stronger than the evil force that's inside Sullivan and his men. It always will be. I learned a lot about Sullivan and the Dungeon of Doom when I was with them, and we will use that information to

bring him down. I'm back with the 'Hulkster,' and I've never been happier in my life. Let me tell you something, Jose: That Dungeon of Doom isn't as strong as Sullivan says it is. It's crumbling, and he knows it. It's only a matter of time before we totally destroy it. And we'll take the Horsemen down, too. It's gonna be a great year for 'Hulkamania.'"

**Q:** "I have a question for Mabel: You weigh more than 500 pounds right now. Have you ever had a problem getting people to take (Continued on page 58)"



Because he weighs 568 pounds, Mabel is sometimes not taken seriously as an athlete. He argues that he must be a pretty good athlete if he has the agility to execute moves such as the belly-to-belly suplex.



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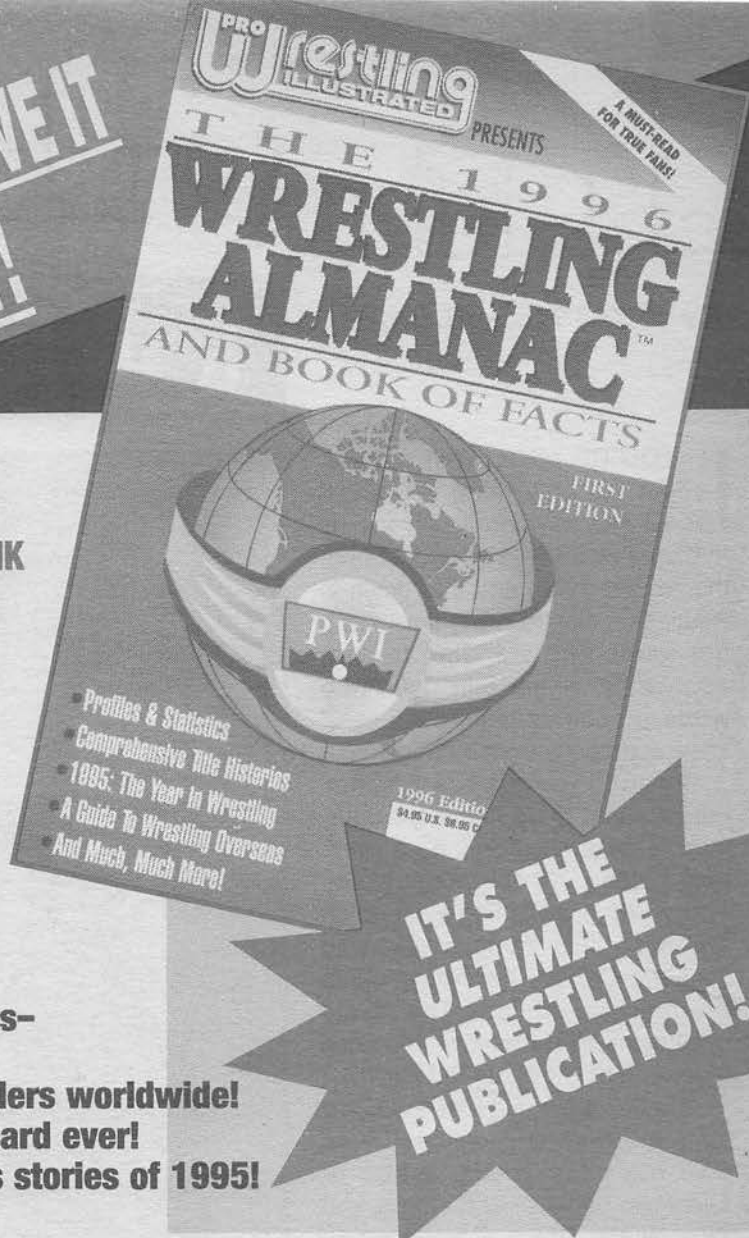
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# Introducing

By Dave Rosenbaum

## KID FLASH

**I**F YOU'RE LIKE most people, about the only thing you know about Allentown, Pennsylvania, is that they've taken all the coal from the ground there, and that down in Bethlehem they're killing time, filling out forms and standing in line. Apparently, singer Billy Joel, who wrote a song called "Allentown," knew somebody from there.

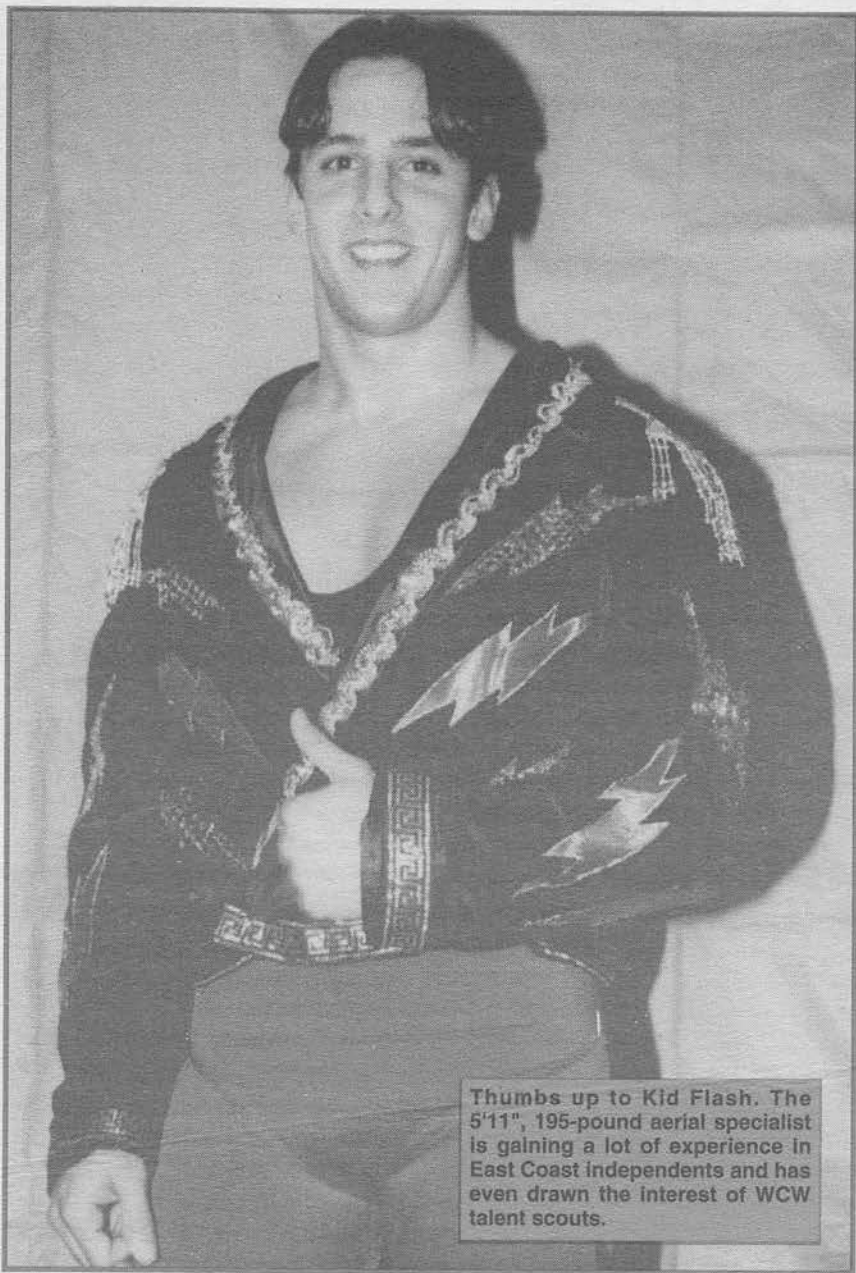
But since you're a wrestling fan, here's some more important information about Allentown: It's a wrestling hotbed. It's the home of the Trans World Wrestling Federation and Afa's Wild Samoan Wrestling Training Center. Four-time world tag team champions The Nasty Boys come from Allentown. So does a newcomer known as Kid Flash.

"That's right," said Flash. "I know there are a lot of people out there who have the wrong image of Allentown because of the song and The Nasty Boys. I'm about to change all that ... in a flash."

Allentown's image, or at least Kid Flash's, could change in a hurry if WCW talent scouts like what they see of the 5'11", 195-pound aerial artist. At press time, Kid Flash was in Atlanta showing off his wares for WCW promoters, and if the tryout goes well, he could sign a nice, flashy contract.

"That's part of the dream," Flash said. "The dream is to one day be recognized as the greatest aerial wrestler in the world and to win a world championship. I'm just trying to take it slow, and I'm doing what people tell me to do. I'm in good hands, and I love what I'm doing."

Kid Flash found his way into Afa's good hands as a teenager by hanging out at The Wild Samoan



Thumbs up to Kid Flash. The 5'11", 195-pound aerial specialist is gaining a lot of experience in East Coast independents and has even drawn the interest of WCW talent scouts.

**He shoots fire out of his hand as he strides to the ring, and now he's trying to blaze his way to the top of the wrestling world. Don't blink, because you might miss Kid Flash's rapid ascent**



Training Center. For Kid Flash, it was a means to achieve a dream. Every day after school, he'd show up at the Center to hang out, help out, and talk with the pros who dropped by.

"After a while, he spent so much time here that I figured I might as well train him," Afa said. "He always had a lot of heart and natural ability, even though he isn't big. But heart and ability can make up for that."

Can Kid Flash one day win a world heavyweight title?

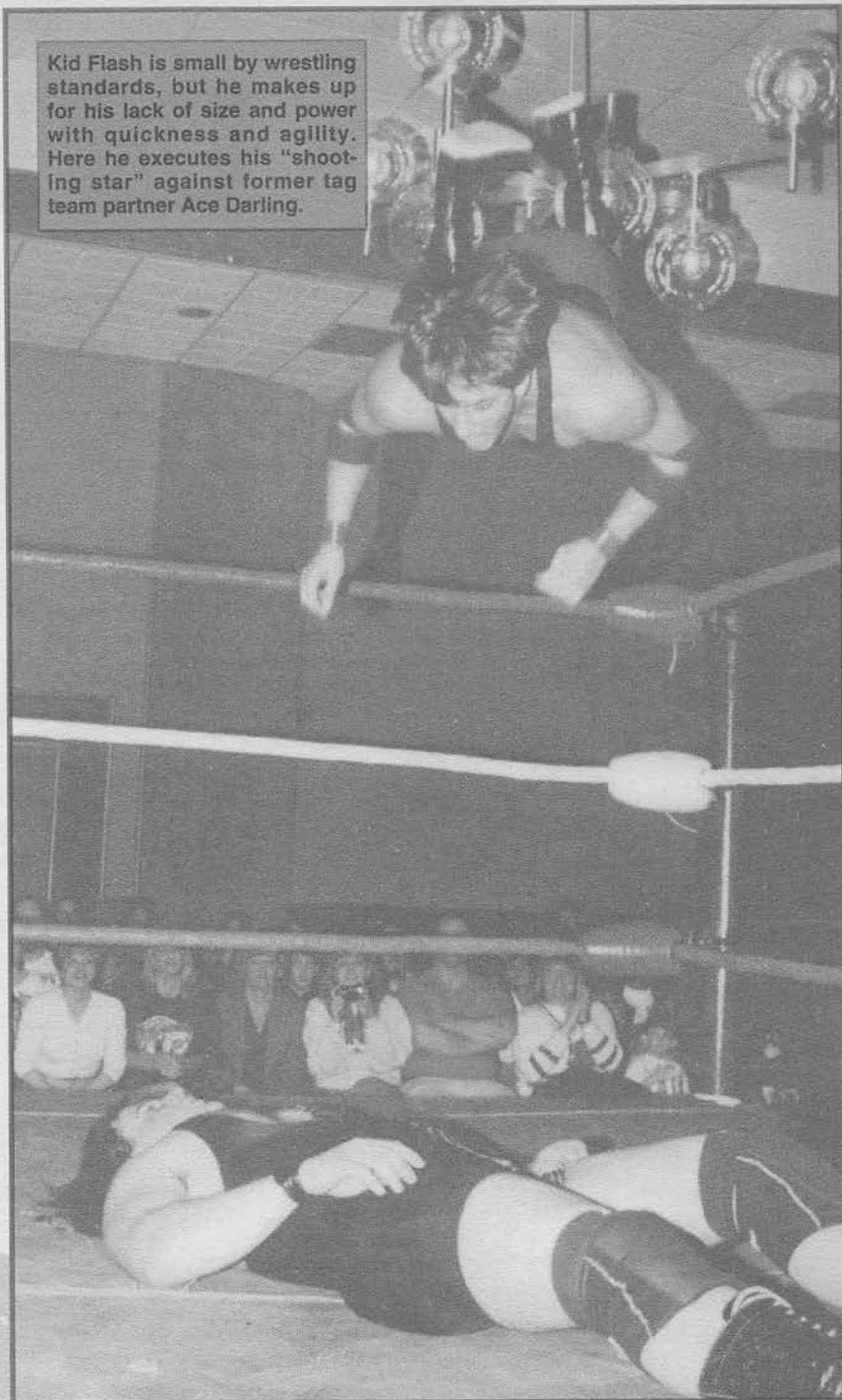
"Much too early to tell," Afa conceded. "But he could be a good one. I think he's going to be a force in the tag team and light heavyweight divisions."

Several wrestlers have contributed to Kid Flash's development, including Afa, Chris Canyon, Terry Taylor, and even Disco Inferno. All of them saw in Kid Flash the necessary desire to make it in a rugged sport that has no room for the faint of heart. Taylor called Kid Flash "like a million other kids who have dreams and want to make it. He has great talent, but it comes down to how much he wants it. The real tests have yet to come."

Actually, Kid Flash knew from the first day of his wrestling career that success wouldn't come easy: He lost his first match to Disco Joey Travolla in the fall of 1994 in Reading, Pennsylvania. Fortunately, Kid Flash knew how to handle that initial setback and went on to better results. He has won the Trans World Federation junior heavyweight title and has shared the East Coast Wrestling Alliance title with Ace Darling. He has also wrestled in the NWA and the AWF in Reading and has had a taste of how quickly things change in wrestling; Darling and Kid Flash are now enemies. Their feud started after they lost the belts to Steve Corino and Lance Diamond. Darling blamed Flash. Flash calls Darling his toughest opponent.

"I can't tell you how many veterans have told me they couldn't count how many friends they've had that turned into enemies,"

Kid Flash is small by wrestling standards, but he makes up for his lack of size and power with quickness and agility. Here he executes his "shooting star" against former tag team partner Ace Darling.



Flash said. "That's one thing Afa told me: Never get too close to anyone, because in this sport, it's dog-eat-dog. I try to remember that, but at some point you have to trust somebody. Look at The Rock 'n' Roll Express. Even they've had their differences."

Kid Flash will have no trouble finding partners, especially with moves like his sensational reverse moonsault, which he calls a "shooting star." Don't be surprised if he

someday teams with one of the two wrestlers he most admires: Eddy Guerrero and Rey Misterio Jr.

For now, Kid Flash is just trying to get some attention. People quickly take notice when he walks to the ring and shoots fire out of his hand. That's a sure attention-getter. But he wants a different kind of attention.

"I want people to recognize me as a great wrestler," he said. "That's what would make me happy." □

# W O M A N

"Anybody who  
trusts me is  
a fool."

# A



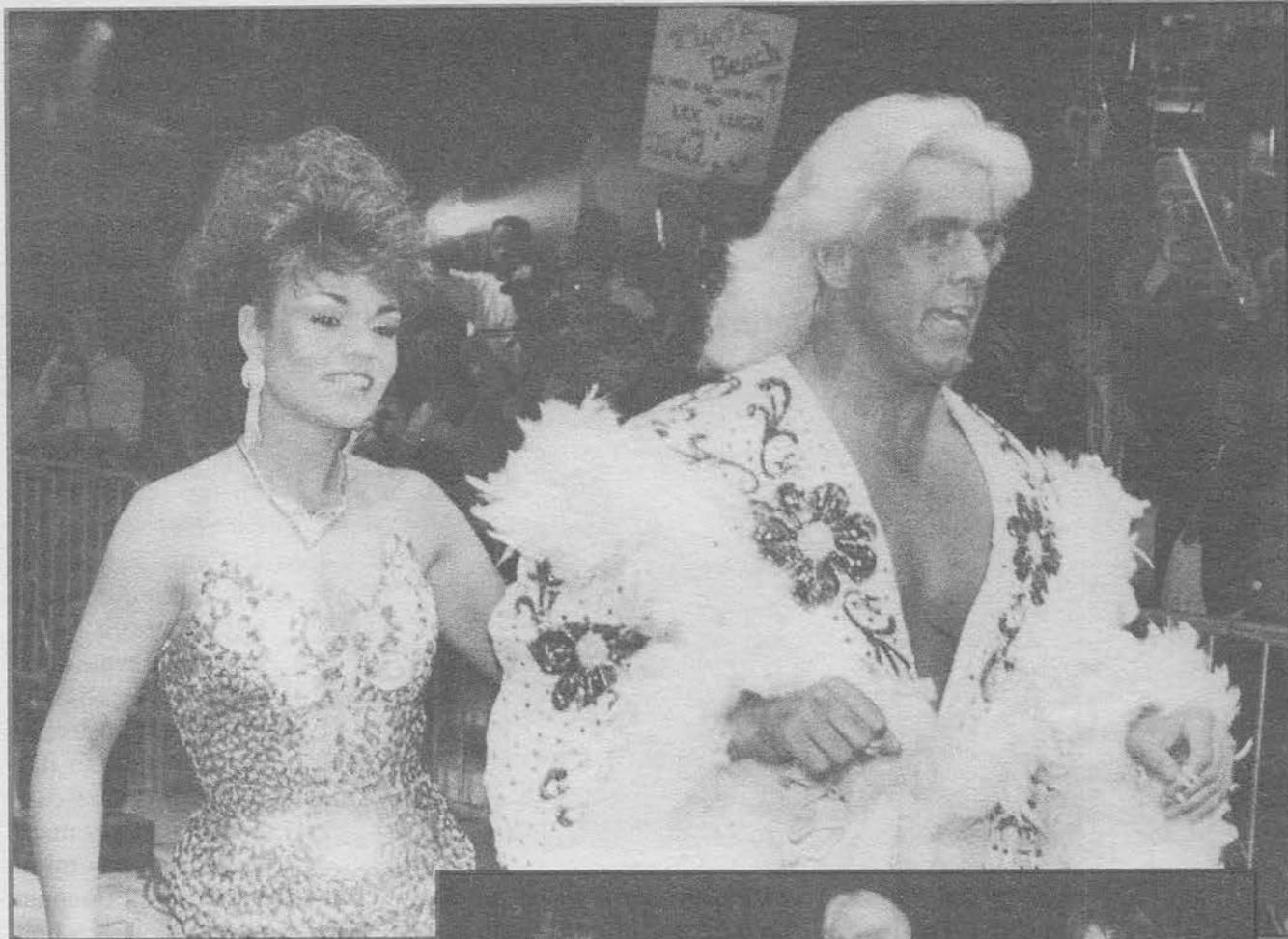
**W**RESTLING IS NOT a sport that treats women kindly. Most are considered some sort of prize for wrestlers and spend most of their time preening and doting. The number of independent women in wrestling can be counted on one hand. Madusa and Sherri Martel are among them, and Sunny has made a career of her independence.

However, there is one more woman to be counted among the minority, and she is all Woman. The longtime manager is equal parts beauty, brains, and ambition, and the combination is a lethal one. Her latest career move has taken her to WCW, where she has aligned herself with Ric Flair. With one swift, smart move, she has vaulted to the top of the federation.

Senior Writer Chris Bernucca recently caught up with Woman, who considers herself one of wrestling's major players. She also makes no apologies for her nomadic nature and apparent lack of loyalty, which has taken her to just about every corner of American wrestling over the last 15 years.

"She was wearing this black two-piece outfit and pumps, but it might as well have been from Brooks Brothers, because she was all business," Bernucca reported. "I'm pretty good at keeping control of an interview, but just by reading this, you can see she doesn't let anyone else call the shots."





**Q:** That's quite an outfit there, Woman. It ...

**A:** It's nothing. You should see the rest of my wardrobe.

**Q:** I'd like to, but something tells me that this interview would never get done ...

**A:** Don't flatter yourself, scribe. I never mix business with pleasure.

**Q:** No ... no, I meant that it would probably take a long time to see all of it.

**A:** Well, you're right about that. In addition to my salary increase, I negotiated a clothing allowance when I came to WCW.

**Q:** How much?

**A:** Let's just say it's probably more than you make in a year ... or maybe two.

**Q:** Is it more than Elizabeth gets?

**A:** Interesting question. Let's



Woman was at Ric Flair's side in 1990, when she advised The Four Horsemen (top), and she's happy to be with him and Elizabeth today (above). She's taking credit for getting Liz to join Flair's camp, though she feels she plays the more important role in the Horsemen.

Woman was a hands-on manager during her time in ECW. She didn't mind attacking the likes of Cactus Jack if it helped her man, The Sandman, win. She claims she was responsible for making him a star.



just say I'm proud of what Elizabeth has done. I'd like to think I had something to do with her change in "attitude," as you writers like to call it. But even Elizabeth needs a lot more than clothes to look better than *me*. Honestly now, do you think Elizabeth is better looking than me?

**Q:** I really don't want to play "mirror, mirror" and get in the middle of that debate. Besides, I'm the one who's supposed to be asking the questions. How did you and Elizabeth become enemies? And how can you be on the same side now?

**A:** She was jealous—gee, Elizabeth jealous, imagine that—of the fact that I was getting more attention and TV time with my alliance with Ric Flair. Deep down, she knew that she could never compete with me

when she was with Randy Savage and Hulk Hogan, so she did the smart thing and joined me. I think we all know that she doesn't have the ring savvy or know-how that I do to affect the outcome of matches, but I'm working with her. She's getting better.

**Q:** Is there any friction between the two of you?

**A:** Don't you go trying to stir up trouble now. The best thing to say about Elizabeth is that if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. That's what she did—she joined us. But she knows who is second banana. If you don't believe me, ask Ric Flair. And let me tell you something else: If I ever find out she's even thinking about running back to those two overgrown oafs, begging for forgiveness, there will be hell to

pay. She'll have to deal with me.

**Q:** You don't exactly sound like you respect her that much.

**A:** She has a long way to go before she'll earn *all* my respect and trust, but she's headed in the right direction. And she knows the pecking order.

**Q:** What is it that you do for Ric Flair that she can't?

**A:** Let me put it this way: When she was with Savage in the past, she was nothing more than a showpiece, a trophy for her man to display. *(In voice-over imitation)* How much would you pay for all

this? Don't answer. Because with the championship belt, you also get this beauty who will never leave your side and pretend to be loyal until you lose the belt. I'm changing all that. I'm working on her new image.

**Q:** Explain.

**A:** In the '80s, Elizabeth got as far as she could by being the good little girl who stood at ringside and did as she was told and never misbehaved. Now she's finding out what's it like to be a real independent woman. I'm not a good little girl. I never was.

**Q:** You mentioned her loyalty before. But what about *your* loyalty?

**A:** Wait a minute, flash. I wasn't finished answering the other question. You asked what I bring that she doesn't. Like I said, she went as far as she could with Savage—and that



was pretty far, I admit—but what does she know about wrestling? The sport is in my blood. How do you think I got this gig in the first place? In ECW, I took The Sandman, a cigarette-smoking, beer-guzzling nobody, and I put him on top of one of the toughest promotions in the country. I kept him there. Everyone who knows anything about this sport knows that I'm much more than a pretty face. Just ask Ric Flair.

**Q:** Okay, fine, now that that's out of the way, what about your loyalty? What about Sandman, who you just left in the lurch? What about all the other wrestlers you've left behind to advance your own career?

**A:** Why don't you go ask Sandman if he thought he was getting into a lifetime partnership? He knew all the time that what we had could stop at any time. He also knew that I could make him the champion that he wanted to be. Plus, he has something to shoot for. He can prove to ECW that I wasn't the reason behind his success. If he wins the belt back, then I guess my influence wasn't as strong as everybody thinks. But my influence, however strong, was there. There's no doubt about that. He probably would have been out of wrestling right now and making fries in a Burger King somewhere if I hadn't rescued his career and made him a champion.

**Q:** So that's your explanation for your lack of loyalty?

**A:** You guys have got it all wrong. I never told any of my wrestlers that I would be loyal to the end. They all

knew from the start that it would be a nice run while it lasted. Neither one of us knew how long the run would last, but we both knew it wouldn't be forever. There's always greener pastures, something more to strive for.

**Q:** So ...

**A:** So, nothing. I give my wrestlers money, power, influence, and usually a championship belt or two. In return, I get a percentage of their purses, prestige, and valuable exposure as one of the top managers in the sport. In short, anybody who trusts me is a fool.

**Q:** Including Ric Flair?

**A:** Ric Flair has been in this sport a long time. He knows better than anybody that the relationship between a wrestler and a manager is a fleeting one at best. He's helping me, and I'm helping him and the rest of The Four Horsemen and their friends. But we both know that we have ulterior motives.

**Q:** So if one day he wakes up and decides to dump you?

**A:** I'll move on. I'll land on my feet. I always do. That was Elizabeth's problem for a long time. She wanted to be around Hogan and Savage and never considered anyone else.

**Q:** How close are you to Flair right now?

**A:** That's really none of your business. Let's just say we work together very closely, but we respect each other's

space as well. Remember, Flair is one of the most successful wrestlers of all-time, and he's done most of that on his own, his way. I'm the most successful female manager of all-time, and I've done most of that my way as well. We don't talk about it, but we both know it.

**Q:** What about when you slapped him a few months ago?

**A:** That was before he knew what I was all about. He tried to talk down to me and manipulate me the same way he has with most women who



Woman is one of the most successful female managers in wrestling history and it is her business to take her wrestlers straight to the top. But although she offers her wrestlers a chance at money, power, and championships, she never offers her loyalty.

have cuddled up to him. He knows that most of them have had ulterior motives. And I let him know right there that I'm not like most women.

**Q:** Then who are you?

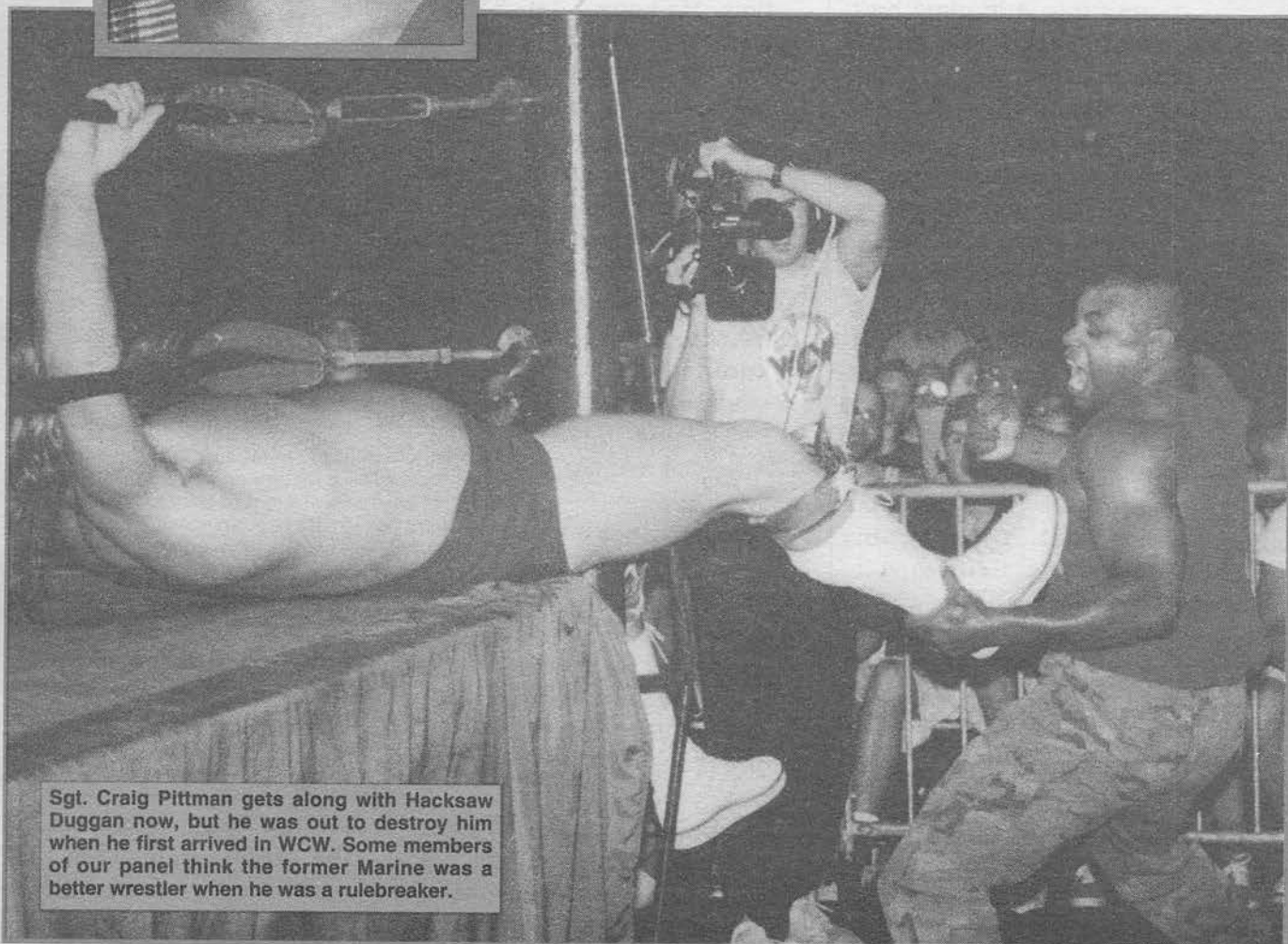
**A:** I'm not another woman, or the other woman. I'm Woman. And you and all of WCW will hear me roar. □

# X-Ray

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES



## SGT. CRAIG PITTMAN



Sgt. Craig Pittman gets along with Hacksaw Duggan now, but he was out to destroy him when he first arrived in WCW. Some members of our panel think the former Marine was a better wrestler when he was a rulebreaker.





## CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"Reminds the Captain a lot of Sgt. Slaughter. Lemme tell you somethin': He was one tough guy. So is Craig Pittman, from what I've seen of him. Strong-willed, determined, and unpredictable. Slaughter wrestled his best when he was angry, and Pittman does, too, daddy! I think being with a manager like Teddy Long—Teddy's smart, don't get me wrong—has taken some of that meanness out of him. I don't think Pittman and Teddy will be together long. They're too different."

*Capt. Lou Albano, "The Guiding Light," has led 33 different tag teams to a record 17 WWF World tag team titles.*



## KILLER KOWALSKI

"Anytime you see a guy who has been wrestling for a while without a manager suddenly hire one, you know something's going wrong with him. That's the case with Pittman. He was in a slump, so he went looking for a manager. Then he settled for Terry Long. He doesn't need a manager. He is at his very best when he wrestles on instinct and doesn't think so much. Long will keep telling him to try this and try that. If he listens to him, he'll just get more confused."

*Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rule-breakers in the sport's history, runs a wrestling school in Reading, Massachusetts.*



## DORY FUNK JR.

"The first thing I look for in a new wrestler is whether he is fundamentally strong. You know, does he know the basics? In Pittman's case, the answer is definitely yes. He was an amateur wrestler for years, and you can tell when you watch him. He's so quick on the mat, and he's a darn good chain wrestler. The one glaring weakness I see in him is that he lets his emotions get the best of him. He's *too* intense. But that problem should take care of itself in time."

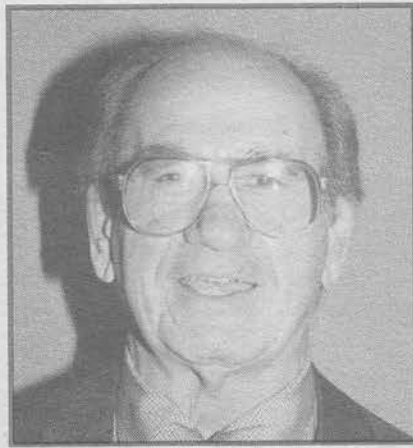
*Dory Funk Jr. held the NWA World championship from 1969 to 1973. He still wrestles from time to time, primarily in Japan.*



## FABULOUS MOOLAH

"I like a man who talks tough and backs up what he says, and Sgt. Craig Pittman has no trouble doin' it. I liked him better as a rulebreaker, though. As a fan favorite, I think he's holding something back. That's why he's been struggling since he signed on with Teddy. He needs to get a little more of that attitude he used to have back. Nothin' against Hacksaw Duggan, but I was impressed when I saw Pittman go after him full-out as soon as he came into WCW."

*Fabulous Moolah, the finest woman wrestler in history, held the World title for 28 years. She trains wrestlers in Columbia, South Carolina.*



## LOU THESZ

"I've heard that some people think Teddy Long isn't helping Pittman's career any, but I must disagree. People forget that Teddy has been around a long time and has managed some great people. He'll pick up on Pittman's weaknesses and help him become a more complete wrestler. There's a lot of raw talent in Pittman, but Long will be able to smooth out the rough edges. Give the man a bit more confidence and experience and he'll be ready to make a run at a title in WCW."

*Lou Thesz held the NWA World title six times during his fabulous 50-year career. Many consider him the greatest all-around wrestler in history.*



## LANCE RUSSELL

"I've been around wrestling for over 30 years now, and I've seen a lot of wrestlers come and go. I think Pittman's going to be around a while. You can see the desire in his eyes when he wrestles. He wants to win and get better, and from what I hear, he's working real hard to be the best he can be. That's nice to hear. He's not looking for short-cuts, either. He's going through tough times now, but five years from now, I think he'll be among the sport's elite."

*Lance Russell, a wrestling broadcaster since 1954, is now retired. He makes periodic guest appearances on WMC-TV in Memphis.*

# Spot Light N...

## THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR

**H**E'S BACK ... **FINALLY.** Acting WWF President Roddy Piper said this winter that if fans of the WWF wanted The Ultimate Warrior to come back, he'd find a way to make it happen. And he made good on his promise. Warrior was to have returned at WrestleMania XII.

A native of Queens, New York, Warrior first became interested in wrestling when he met Sting while training for a bodybuilding contest in 1985. They were trained for careers in wrestling by Red Bastien and soon began competing in California as a duo known as Powerteam U.S.A. (Warrior was then known as Rock, Sting as Flash). Later they moved to the Mid-Southern area, changed the team's name to The Blade Runners, and began wearing face paint.

They were both briefly managed by Eddie Gilbert, but Rock soon struck out on his own and moved to World Class.

Calling himself The Dingo Warrior there, he saw his career guided by both Percy Pringle and Gary Hart. It wasn't until he split with them that he began hearing the cheers of the fans. He went on to capture both the World Class tag team title (with Lance Von Erich) and the



World Class Texas title. But by mid-1987, he had moved on to the WWF, where The Ultimate Warrior was born.

Warrior wrestled lower-level competition for a while before dominating feuds with Harley Race and

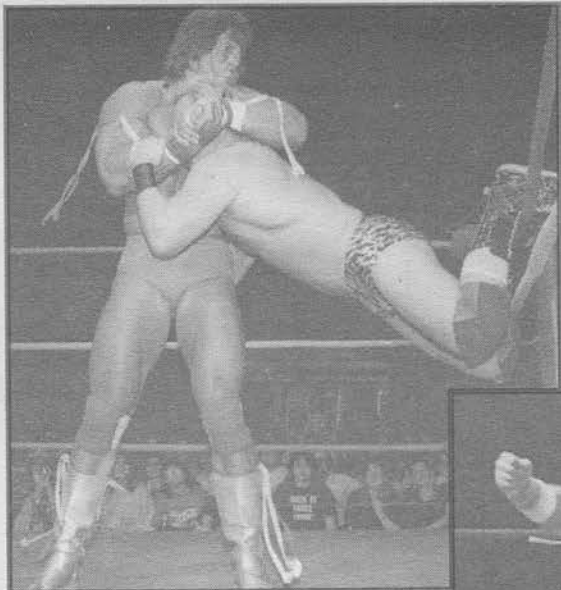
Hercules. Then, at SummerSlam '88, he got a shot at the Intercontinental title, and he pinned The Honky Tonk Man for the belt in 31 seconds! The crowd went crazy!

He lost the belt to Rick Rude at WrestleMania V, then regained it at SummerSlam '89. That's when he started to set his sights on Hulk Hogan and the World title. He cleanly pinned Hogan at WrestleMania VI for the World title and gladly relinquished the I-C belt. Warrior and Hogan never had a rematch. From there, there were memorable feuds with Sgt. Slaughter (to whom Warrior lost the World belt at the 1991 Royal Rumble), Rude, Randy Savage, Papa Shango, and The Undertaker, just to name a few.

Many figured he had left the sport for good when he disappeared from the WWF in late-1992, but he came back last summer and beat The Honky Tonk Man on a National Wrestling Conference card in Las Vegas.

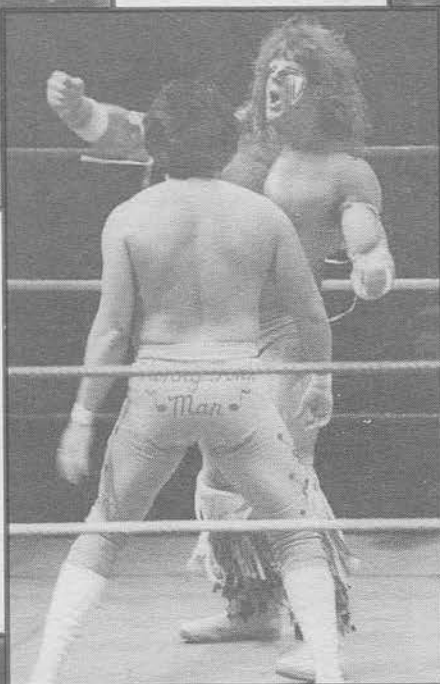
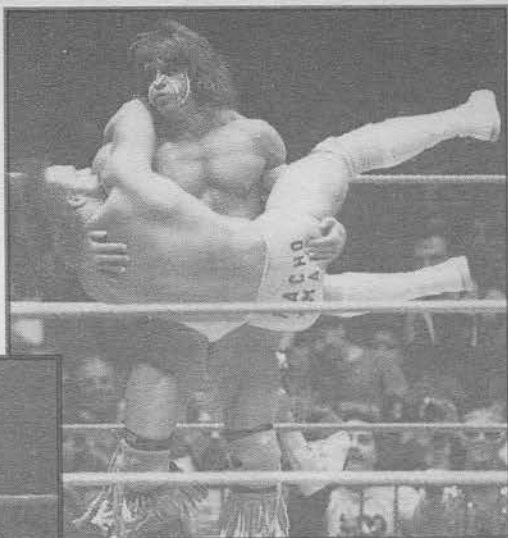
Will the Warrior ever be as dominant as he was in the late-1980s and early-1990s? That remains to be seen. What we do know is Warrior has definitely earned his chance to appear in our "Spotlight."





February 1987: He was known as The Dingo Warrior when he pinned Bobby Bradley for the World Class Texas title. Just a few months later, he arrived in the WWF.

February 1989: "Macho Man" Randy Savage wasn't so popular when The Ultimate Warrior crossed paths with him in 1989. Warrior holds several victories over Savage in his career.



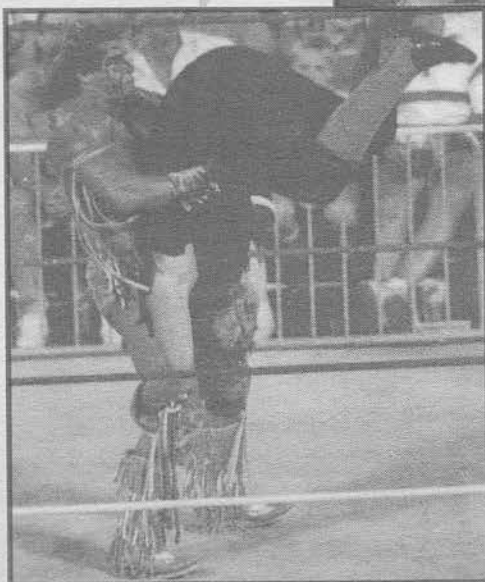
October 1988: The Honky Tonk Man never had much luck against the Warrior. He lost the Intercontinental title to him in 31 seconds at SummerSlam '88 and didn't fare any better in rematches.



July 1995: Warrior had been away from the ring for more than 2½ years, but he didn't look too rusty when he returned to wrestling to face—and defeat yet again—The Honky Tonk Man on an independent card.



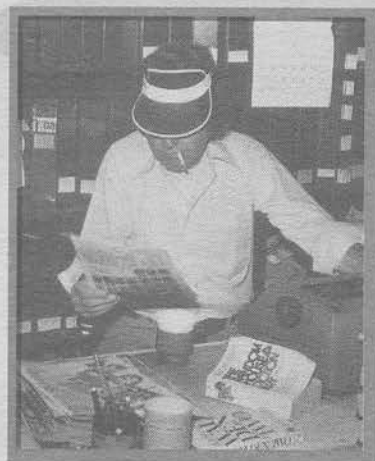
April 1990: A WrestleMania match people still talk about. Warrior not only beat Hulk Hogan for the WWF World title, he did so with a clean pin. It was the first time in nine years someone had done that to Hogan.



July 1991: Most people remember the time The Undertaker locked the Warrior in an airtight coffin. Warrior, however, got his revenge when they met inside the ring.

# MATT BROCK'S

# Looking Back



July 1961

## The Sheik vs. Bobo Brazil

**W**OMEN TODAY HAVE it easy. Women in wrestling at least. I know all the feminists out there will be thrilled to read that line, but whoever said Matt Brock was politically correct? Think about it: Everyone has gone gaga over Sunny in the WWF. Elizabeth's shocking turn in WCW is all anyone can talk about there. Woman, The Diamond Doll, Madusa, all the women of ECW.

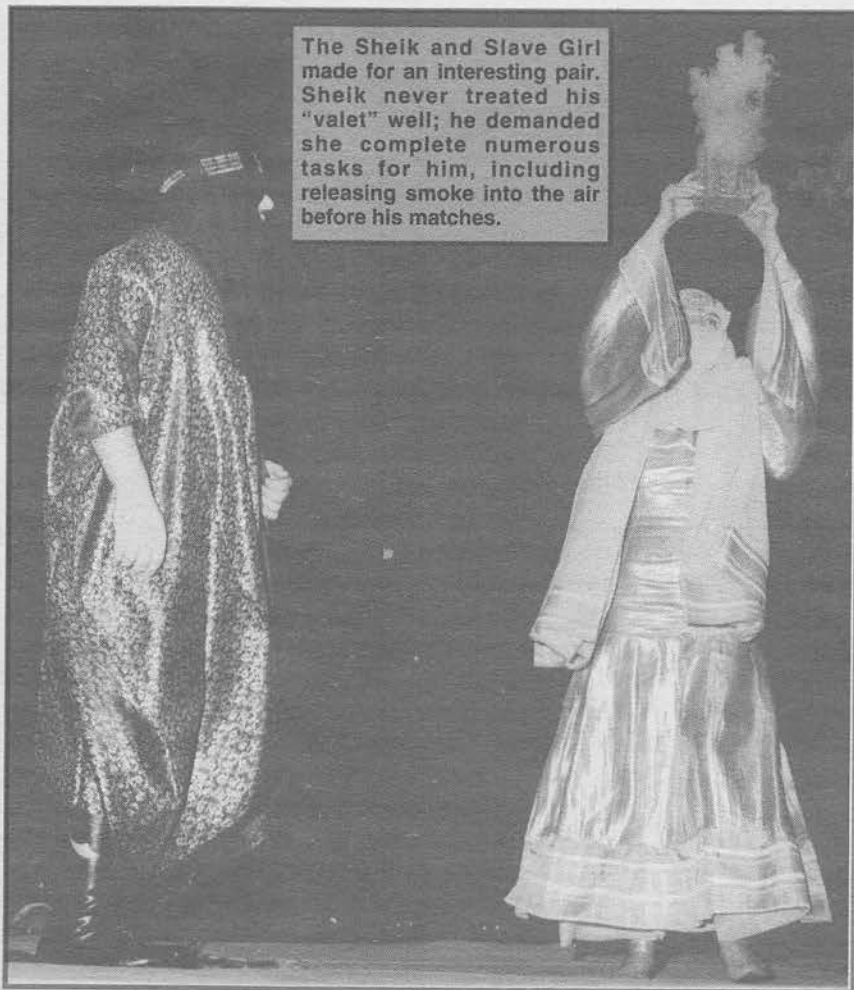
What has this sport come to when we're devoting most of an issue of *THE WRESTLER* to women? Whatever happened to the days when wrestling was about two guys beating the heck out of each other?

So when Managing Editor Dave Lenker told me he'd "prefer that I wrote something about women" in this issue, you can guess what my reaction was. I told him I'd write about The Sheik.

"The Sheik?!" he said. "What does he have to do with women?"

I love the younger generation. They know their history so well. The Sheik, if you didn't know, did have a valet—I guess that's what you'd call her—for a time. Didn't exactly treat

The Sheik and Slave Girl made for an interesting pair. Sheik never treated his "valet" well; he demanded she complete numerous tasks for him, including releasing smoke into the air before his matches.





her like a lady. Seems Sheik's relatives in Saudi Arabia were so proud of what he was doing against American wrestlers that they sent him over a "present." That gift was a woman called Slave Girl.

She didn't interfere in his matches. Wasn't involved in strategy or training sessions. She just held on to his gear, carried this odd device that she used to spew smoke into the air before Sheik's matches, and did whatever else he said. Often times, when things went wrong for The Sheik during a match, he'd charge out of the ring and slap *her* for no good reason.

I still remember the night in Detroit in 1961 when I went into The Sheik's dressing room to find out more about Slave Girl. When I got there, Sheik was nowhere to be found, but I saw Slave Girl. I tried asking her a few questions, but it was obvious she didn't speak English, and she seemed distressed that I was talking to her.

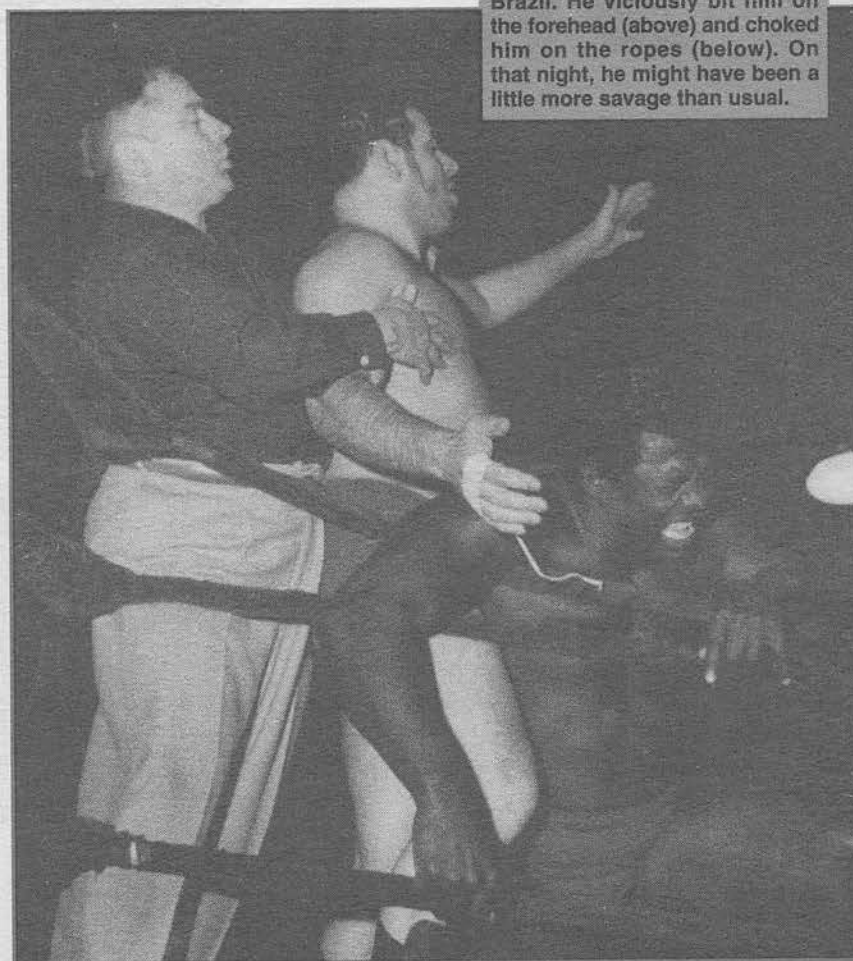
Suddenly, The Sheik bolted into the room. Yelled at me in a language I didn't understand. I didn't know the man well, and I don't mind telling you I was scared. Had this wild look in his eye. Luckily for me, his assistants pulled him off me and explained that The Sheik doesn't let anyone talk to Slave Girl.

I composed myself and found my seat. Sheik was wrestling Bobo Brazil that night, and he didn't wait for the bell to begin his attack. As soon as Slave Girl was done releasing that mysterious smoke into the air, Sheik jumped Bobo from behind. Cornered him and choked him on the ropes, then kept looking in Slave Girl's direction and signalling to her with his hands. Brazil fought back courageously and had Sheik in trouble after knocking him to the canvas with several "coco-butts."

Wasn't enough, though. Sheik was even more out of control than usual on this night. It was like he was angry about something. Maybe it was my attempt to talk to Slave Girl. He got Brazil down again and choked him and bit him. The referee tried to pull The Sheik off, but it was no use. Sheik threw him off, pulled a foreign object out of his tights, and pounded



Sheik was his usual savage self in the match against Bobo Brazil. He viciously bit him on the forehead (above) and choked him on the ropes (below). On that night, he might have been a little more savage than usual.



on Bobo again. The ref had no choice but to disqualify him.

Sheik left the ring in a huff, all the while screaming at Slave Girl.

I've gotten to know him a lot better over the last 35 years. In fact, I talked to him through his interpreter a few weeks ago, and he admitted

that Slave Girl helped him a lot in his career, that she shouldn't have treated her so poorly. Said he didn't know what had become of her. I didn't remind about the night in 1961 when he attacked me.

And just for the record, I never did get an interview with Slave Girl. □

# Odds Are THE WCW TAG TEAM SCENE IS ABOUT TO EXPLODE

We can't remember the last time one federation had as many quality tag teams as WCW has now. But which is the best? Which will survive this war of attrition? And which will end up wearing the gold?

By Dave Rosenbaum

**Y**OU CAN'T HAVE a war without at least two sides. We don't know who said that—probably nobody—but it's true. And the hottest wars are fought on more than one front. Take World War II, for example. It was fought all over Europe and in the Pacific. There were multiple sides with multiple agendas.

WCW currently has a combustible situation on the tag team front. The recent arrival of four-time former ECW tag team champions Public Enemy, combined with the return of The Road Warriors—considered by most to be the greatest tag team ever—has added life and the threat of added carnage to the WCW scene. It's hot and getting hotter.

In fact, it's about to explode. At press time, the tenuous pairing of Lex Luger and Sting still held the WCW World tag team title, but they were facing challenges on all fronts. Nothing in wrestling is permanent. Everything changes. But if you're a betting fan, here's a rundown of seven of the more dangerous teams in the mix and their odds of capturing the gold before 1996 is over.



## HARLEM HEAT

The four-time WCW World tag team champions have beaten two of the teams listed here for the belts (Nastys, Buck and Slater) and remain a major factor in the tag team picture. However, a loss to Luger and Sting at SuperBrawl VI and the return of The Road Warriors might have knocked Stevie Ray and Booker T into the lower echelon of contenders. It's a strange situation for former world champions, but WCW promoters are seemingly in no hurry to grant Harlem Heat many matches against the Warriors or Luger and Sting. Here's one team that's capable of winning a title in any federation in the world, but also one that could get lost in the shuffle. **ODDS OF WINNING A TITLE IN 1996: 4-1**

## THE NASTY BOYS

Misguided and lost in hate, Brian Knobs and Jerry Sags could be the greatest casualty of the WCW street fight war. Most people already feel The Nasty Boys are superior to Public Enemy, so why are Knobs and Sags wasting their time proving what has already been proven? Public Enemy will get their number at some point; then what will the Nastys do? Then again, insiders say WCW promoters are salivating for a Nasty Boys vs. Road Warriors matchup, figuring it would match the top tag team of the 1990s (the Nastys are three-time WCW and one-time WWF world tag team champs) against the top tag team of the 1980s. The Nastys figure to be right in the middle of every WCW tag team title battle. **ODDS OF WINNING A TITLE IN 1996: 5-2**

## BUNKHOUSE BUCK & DICK SLATER

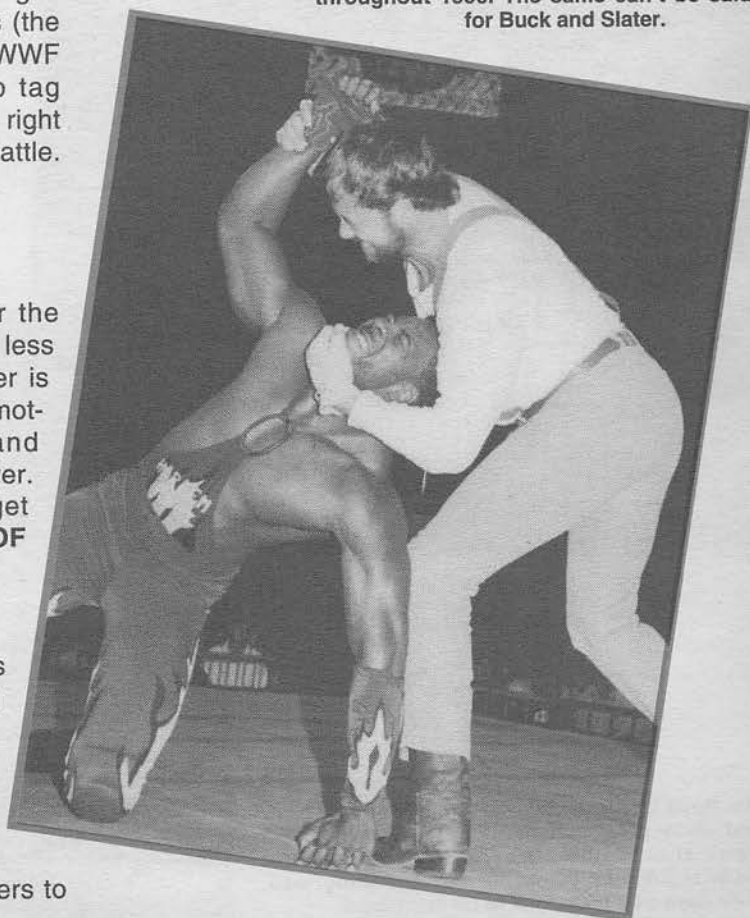
Buck and Slater beat Harlem Heat for the belts last summer and held on to them for less than two months. Manager Col. Rob Parker is out to lunch and distracted, and WCW promoters are no longer enamored of Buck and Slater, who have questionable drawing power. They'll really have to be impressive to get more than the occasional title shot. **ODDS OF WINNING A TITLE IN 1996: 20-1**

## PUBLIC ENEMY

The four-time ECW tag team champions overwhelmed clearly inferior opposition in the violent independent federation and face a far more daunting task in WCW. Add to that their questionable motive: It's hard to say whether Rocco Rock and Johnny Grunge care more about titles or proving themselves as superior street fighters to

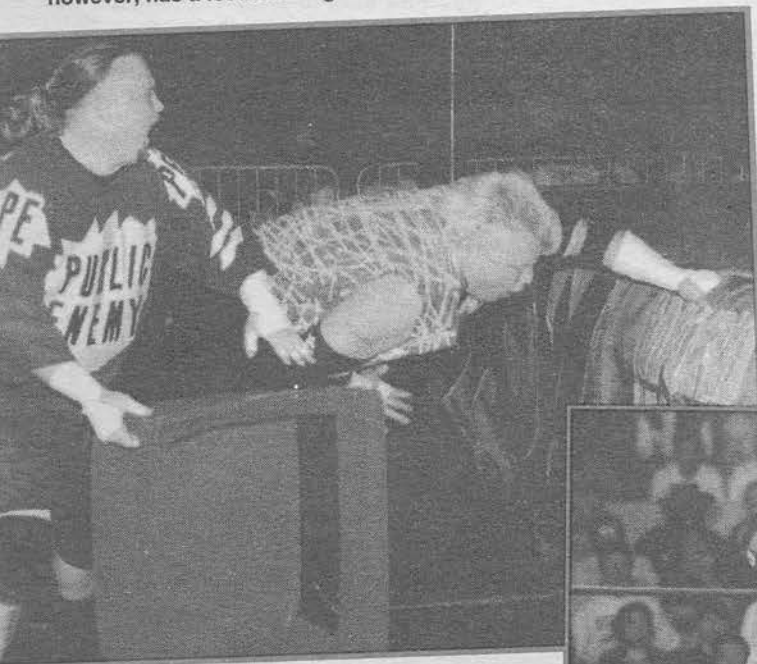


Harlem Heat's Steve Ray has battled both The Nasty Boys (above) and Bunkhouse Buck and Dick Slater (below) over the past two years. The Heat and Nastys should contend for the WCW tag title throughout 1996. The same can't be said for Buck and Slater.

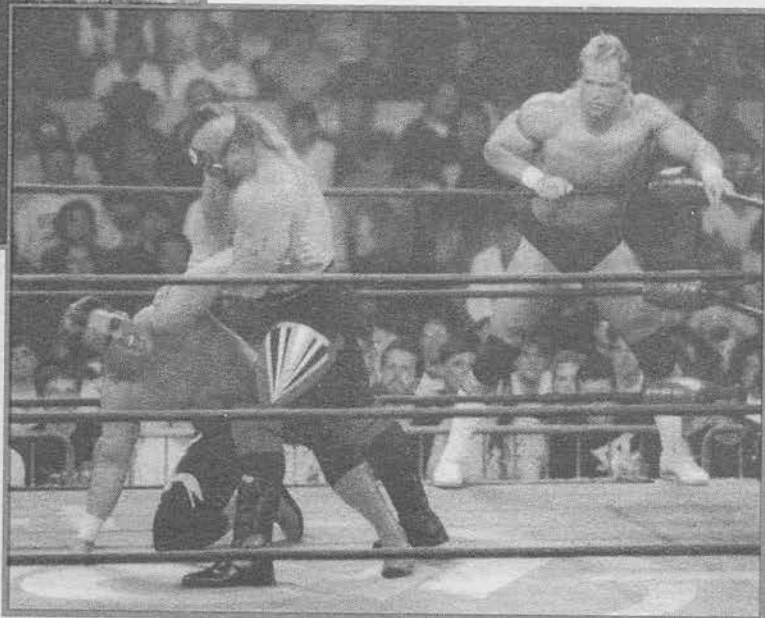




Chairs ... pieces of wood ... The Nasty Boys and Public Enemy will use anything they can get their hands on against each other. PE, however, has a lot more to gain in this feud than the Nastys do.



The Road Warriors and Sting and Lex Luger have had some great matches this year. Animal and Hawk should find a way to win their second WCW tag title in '96. As for Lex and Sting, well, their days as a team look to be numbered.



The Nasty Boys. Somebody should teach them a lesson about wrestling history: People only remember champions. Maybe the best thing that could happen to Public Enemy would be for the Nastys to win the tag belts. That would spur Rock and Grunge into action. On the other hand, PE hasn't exactly been overwhelming in its matches against the Nastys and other top WCW competition. **ODDS OF WINNING A TITLE IN 1996: 5-1**

## THE ROAD WARRIORS

Hawk and Animal didn't return after a 2½-year absence just so they could show off the latest hot styles in spiked leather football gear. They've come back to win the belts, and if past performances are any indication, they'll get the job done ... eventually. Although The Legion of Doom has won both the WCW and WWF world tag team titles, they often get sidetracked by meaningless feuds and their thirst for senseless violence. Problems could arise because the WCW atmosphere is so volatile; the Warriors invaded with a chip on their shoulders and may have done more to contribute to the demise of the Luger-Sting pairing than to their own title hopes. What's clear is that they are the best tag team in the federation and possibly still the best tag team in the world. They should get the job done. **ODDS OF WINNING A TITLE IN 1996: 8-5**



## RIC FLAIR & ARN ANDERSON

Flair seems so uncertain of his purpose these days that it's hard to even consider this a regular tag team. Arn is one of the greatest tag team wrestlers of all-time, but he's going to have a hard time keeping Flair's mind on business. The "Nature Boy" is in it for the fun. **ODDS OF WINNING A TITLE IN 1996: 10-1**

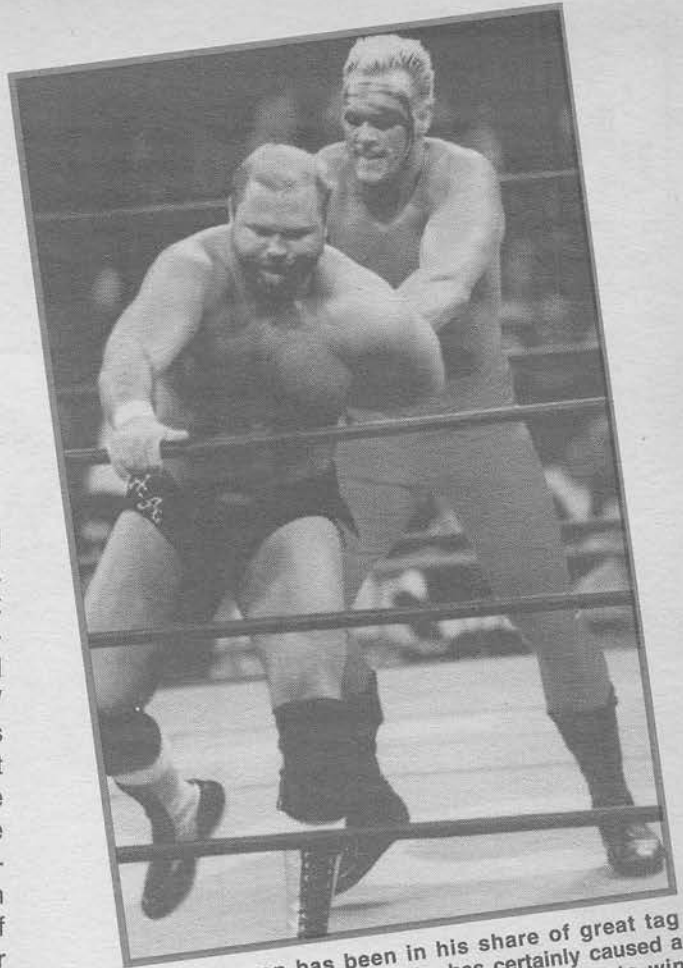
## THE STEINERS

The Steiners get a little annoyed when people say they are making a comeback. "We were never gone," says Scott. In fact, they were and they weren't. They were away from the mainstream U.S. wrestling scene—competing in Japan and ECW—and they did not maintain as grueling a schedule as they had in the past, but they were not out of the sport or split apart for an extended period and are not in a position where they have to rid themselves of ring rust. The three-time NWA/WCW and two-time WWF world tag team champions returned to WCW because they couldn't stand not being part of a federation that boasts arguably the deepest roster of tag team competitors in the sport's history. The Steiners accepted the challenge of Lex Luger and Sting at SuperBrawl I in May 1991 in a epic battle that was voted Match of the Year. A half-decade later, they expect Luger and Sting to return the favor. **ODDS OF WINNING A TITLE IN 1996: 3-1**

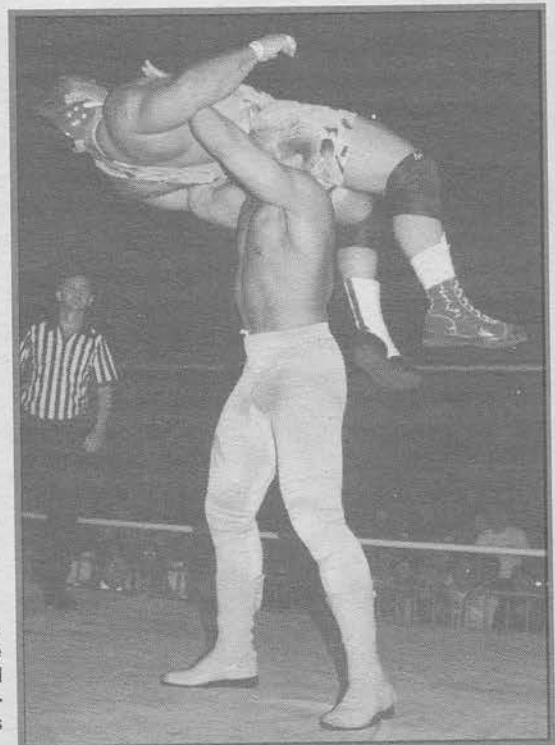
## LEX LUGER & STING

The long-running "Whose side are you on?" debate has particular implications for Luger and Sting, because the allegiance of both men has been questioned. Luger looks like the bad guy in all this, although Sting could be a little more trusting. Remember, "Stinger": People often act the way you expect them to act. Luger and Sting are also wildcards in this situation, because both are still interested in singles titles. Luger desperately wants the World heavyweight title and Sting, while taking a backseat to Luger, certainly wouldn't mind adding another World or U.S. title to his resume. Odds are this team will be history by the time you read this. □

Sting tries to force a submission from Rick Steiner in the SuperBrawl I battle between the champion Steiners and Sting and Lex Luger. Sting would ultimately be pinned by Scott in 1991's Match of the Year.



Arn Anderson has been in his share of great tag teams over the years, and he has certainly caused a lot of trouble for Sting. But if he's looking to win another tag team title, he'll need someone other than Ric Flair in his corner.



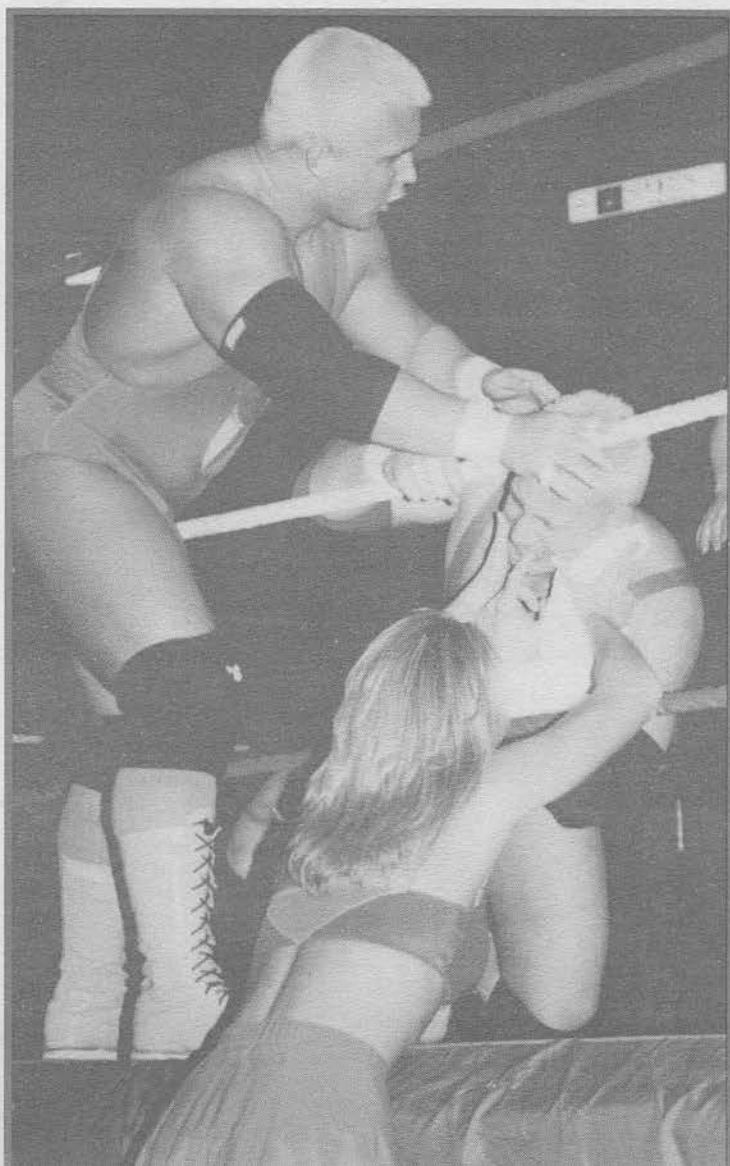
# SUNNY.

**The comparison is telling. Tammy Fytch managed champions. Sunny manages an unproven tag team. This manager-turned-cheerleader needs to get back to managing ... managing more champions!**

They might be her enemies now, but it didn't take much prodding to get Sunny to pose with Henry Godwinn and Shawn Michaels at a recent WWF media event. She ought to get used to posing with wrestlers other than Skip and Zip.



# — TIME TO PLAY WITH THE BIG BOYS!



By Steve Anderson

**W**HEN TAMMY FYTCH arrived in Smoky Mountain Wrestling in mid-1993, she vowed to take control of that promotion. Motivated by the example of her role model, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Fytch made good on her claim when she led Brian Lee to the SMW heavyweight title, Lee and Chris Candido to the SMW tag team title, and Candido to the NWA title. Many observers felt that Fytch was well on her way to becoming the most influential manager in wrestling.

Her career ascent continued when she entered the WWF in 1995. As Bodydonna Sunny, she continued her professional relationship with the newly christened Bodydonna Skip (Candido). More importantly, she was plying her trade in the wrestling equivalent of the White House!

Unfortunately, it now looks like that is where she peaked.

Through no fault of her own, her man Skip has faltered in his short WWF career. Key losses to mid-level wrestlers (including prelim

Sunny is, in reality, not just a cheerleader. She gets involved in Bodydonna's strategy sessions and helps when her men get hurt. However, as long as she manages mid-level talent like Skip and Zip, she probably won't be considered one of the great managers.

wrestler Barry Horowitz) have made more of an impression on the fans and media than his victories. Sunny's attempt to breathe life into Skip's ailing career came in the form of a new Bodydonna, Zip. Sure, she got them a bunch of

she promised to turn Skip and Zip into champions in the WWF, but it's looking more and more like she never will. She's stuck in a rut, and Skip and Zip put her there. The bottom line is that she has done all she can for them.

On the other hand ... the WWF is loaded with top-level wrestlers who could use a spark. Men who could use a beautiful, intelligent, cunning woman at their side. And Sunny needs the respect and notoriety that comes with being a premier manager.

"You have to be more than a pretty face if you want to be taken seriously as a manager," said Sherri Martel, who feuded with Fytch in SMW. "You have to be intelligent, courageous, and you have to take risks. If someone you're managing isn't getting the job done, you have to have the courage to dump them and move on to someone who will."

Perhaps Sunny should listen to the words of a woman who has managed superstars such as Ric Flair, Ted DiBiase, Shawn Michaels, and Randy Savage. She even led an underdog tag team called Harlem Heat to four

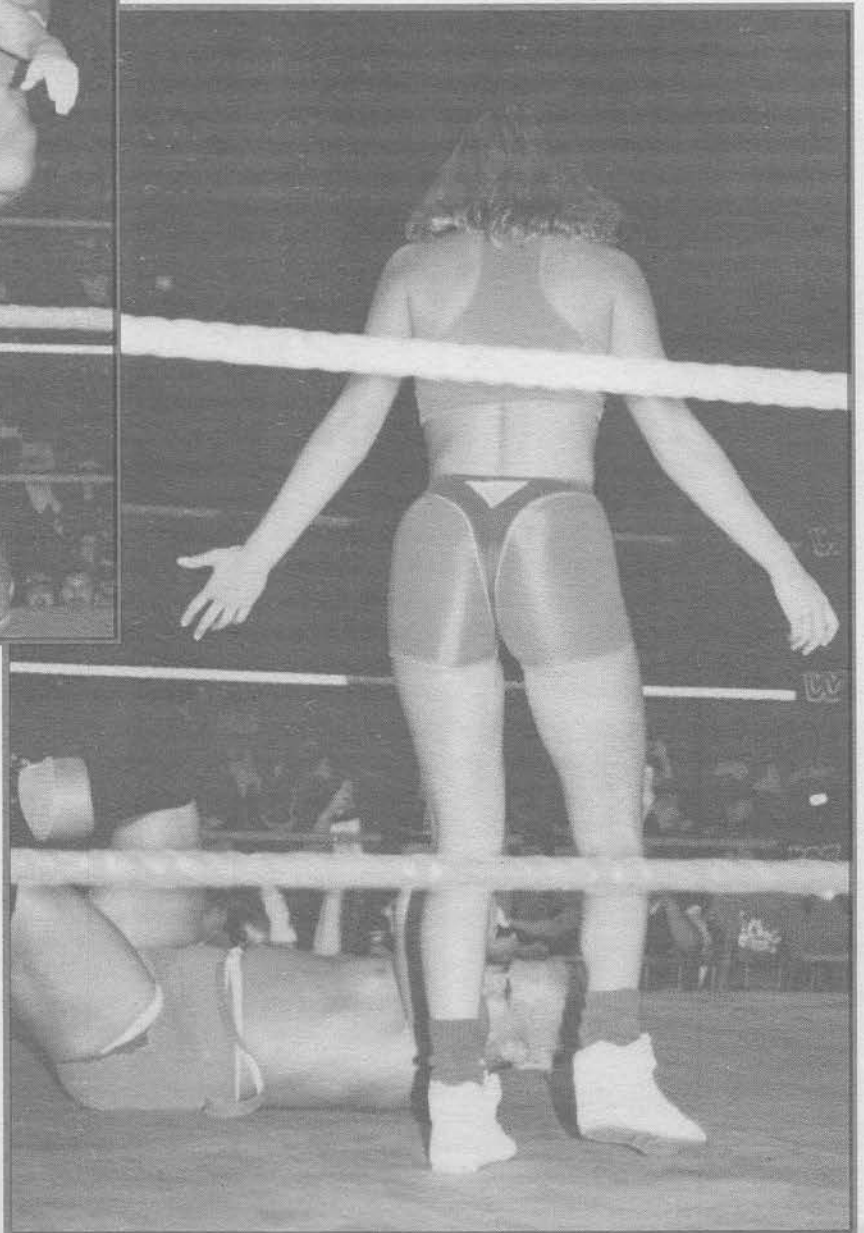


**The Bodydonnas' problems began when Skip lost a series of bouts to Barry Horowitz (above). Sunny was hardly sympathetic (right). Hey, if she's that frustrated by Bodydonna losses, she should move on to someone else!**

shots at the WWF tag team title, and she provided a nice distraction to her team's opponents at ring-side, but so far, it hasn't helped. The Bodydonnas keep losing and losing.

Hillary has Whitewater. Sunny has Skip and Zip.

Until now, Sunny has always delivered on her promises. She promised to mold both Lee and Candido into champions in SMW, and she did. A few months ago,





WCW World tag team titles in 1994 and 1995.

"Sunny needs to look around and assess the talent in the WWF the way she did in Smoky Mountain," continued Martel. "In a smaller promotion, she could afford to take chances with unproven people. When you get to the WWF, you only get a few opportunities to succeed. She should be more selective and find the man or men she can take to the top quick."

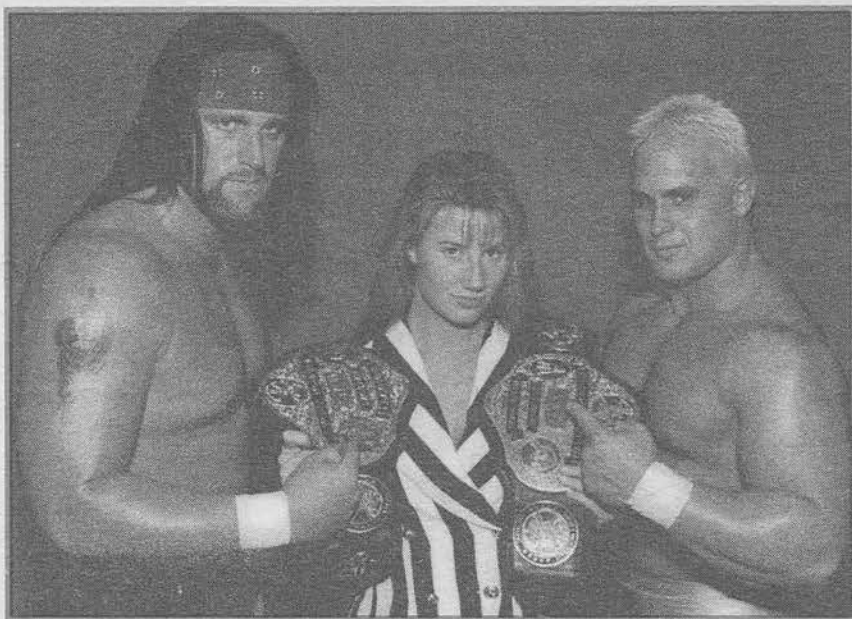
This is not to imply that Skip is a lousy wrestler. He won several SMW tag titles and an NWA belt. But it has become apparent that he is not ready to be a superstar in the WWF. If it were not for his slump, wrestling fans would not be adorned with T-shirts bearing Barry Horowitz' likeness. Zip, on the other hand, has hardly done anything to help Skip.

"She needs to quit acting like a cheerleader and try to get people to take her more seriously again," said Martel. "Cheerleaders are bouncy and bubbly. A manager should be devious and daring. My guess is that a lot of the wrestlers in the WWF don't take her seriously as a manager right now."

But if Sunny's problems can be easily solved with personnel changes, then what's holding her back? Fear? Not fear of other wrestlers or managers, but fear of success. Or fear of change, fear of the unknown. For her to be successful in the WWF, she would probably have to sever ties with Skip, a man she has managed for most of her career. And if she did dump Skip and Zip, would any WWF superstar take her and overlook her recent setbacks?

"Sometimes you have to be more lucky than good," said Martel. "If you catch a wrestler at the right moment, you can take him straight to the top. And she has a wealth of talent to choose from."

Sunny would easily fit on the arm of Shawn Michaels, Owen



In 1994, Tammy Fytch managed SMW tag team champions Brian Lee and Chris Candido (above). Now she looks like a bubbly, sexy manager/cheerleader of Skip and Zip (below). She's in a more visible promotion, but she's hardly improving her image as a shrewd manager.



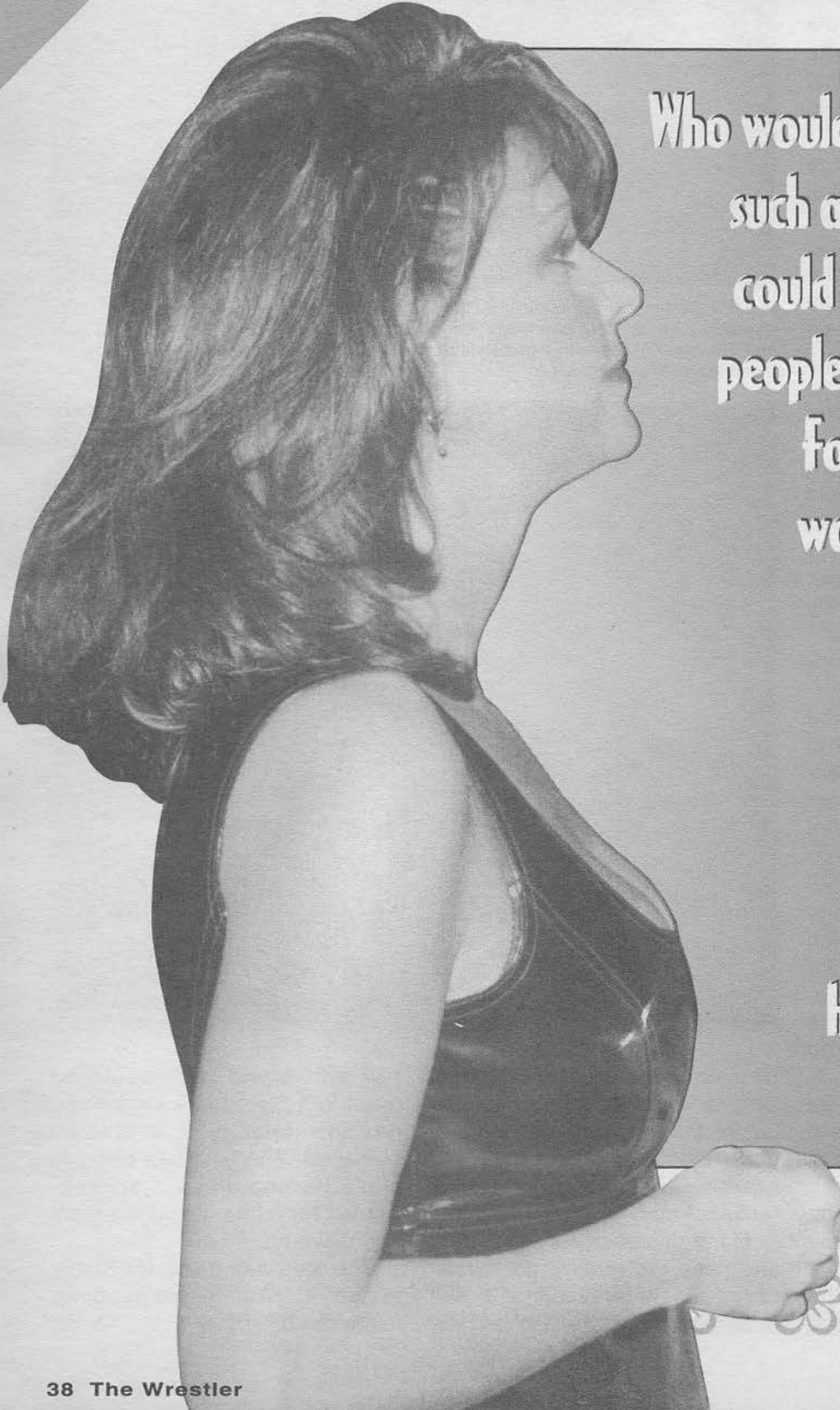
Hart, or Hunter Hearst Helmsley. She is, with apologies to Lex Luger, the total package. A wonderful combination of beauty and brains. And she has a track record of managing champions.

Many of her peers agree that she needs to forever rid herself of her fellow Bodydonnas if she is to survive in the WWF. The

risk she would take would be great, but Sunny has shown she has the tenacity to overcome obstacles. The time has come to close her mouth as a spokeswoman for a foundering tag team and move on.

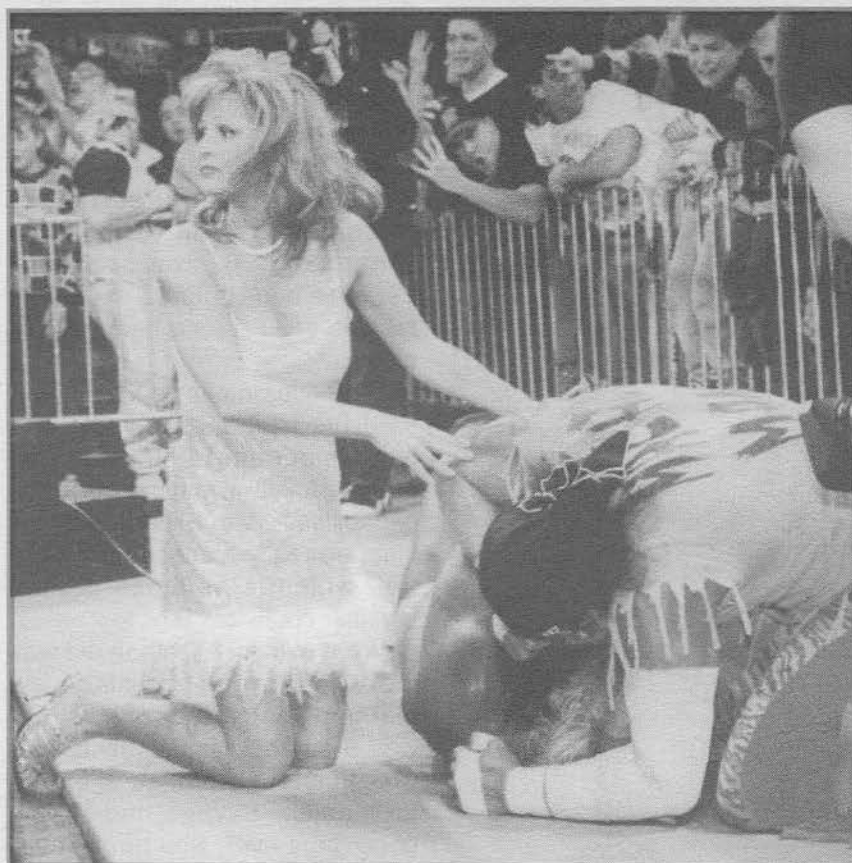
The time has come for Sunny to "Zip" it, "Skip" it, and get down to serious business. □

# ELIZABETH:



Who would have thought  
such a sweet woman  
could cause so many  
people so much pain?  
For years, we all  
wanted her back  
in wrestling.  
Now we'd do  
anything if we  
could give  
her and her  
high-heel shoes  
the boot!





When Elizabeth rushed to Hulk Hogan's side after a match in January (above), we thought she was showing genuine concern. Turns out she was biding her time, just waiting to join the side of Ric Flair and Woman (right). Those three are trouble.

By Eddie Ellner

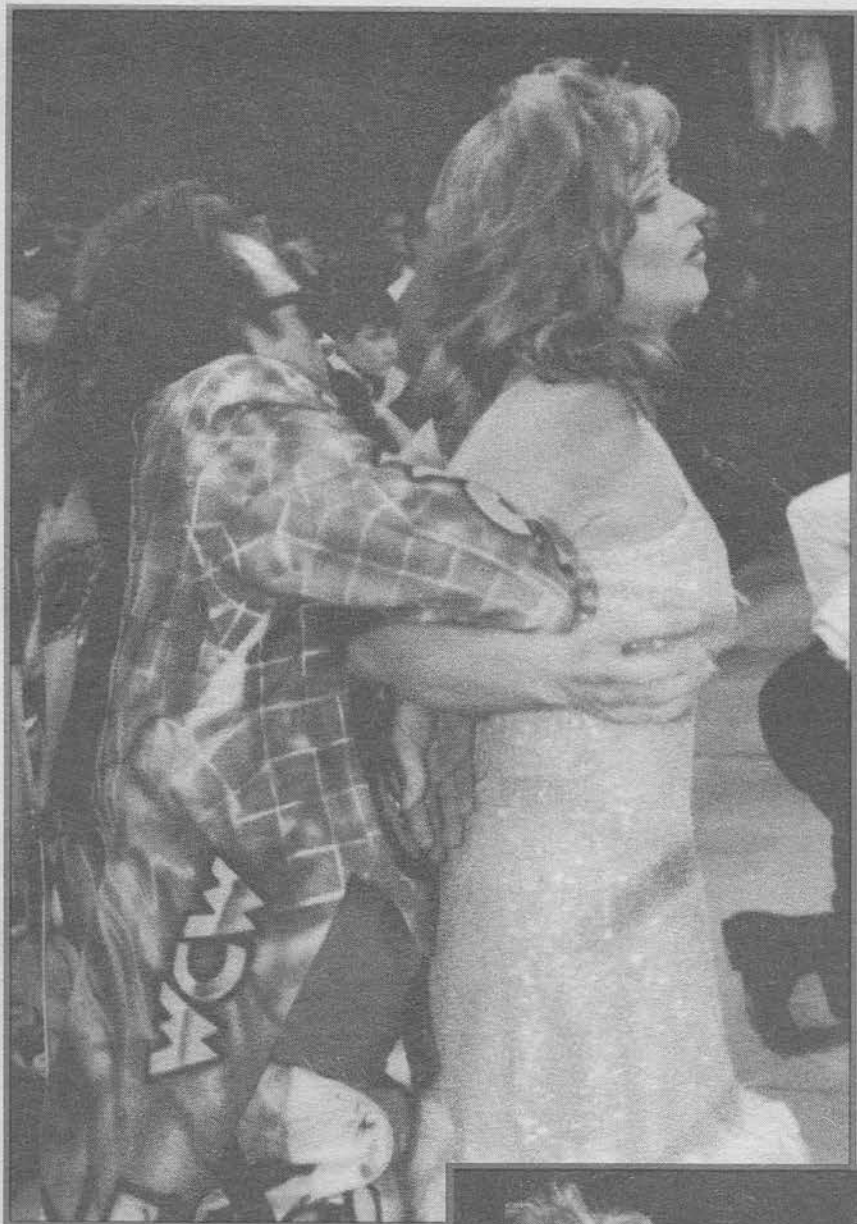
**A** LITTLE MORE than 12 years ago, in front of an enthusiastic crowd at Memphis' Mid-South Coliseum, Randy Savage beat Terry Taylor for the Mid-America heavyweight title in a match that thrilled the crowd, but left Savage in despair and close to retirement.

"He called me from a pay phone on the side of a highway and said he was going to quit," recalled a close friend of Savage who asked that his name not be used. "Said he couldn't stand not wrestling the way he knew he could. He was tired of mediocrity. Couldn't stand himself."

Blessed with the natural athletic talent of any two men, Savage was nonetheless



MORE  
TROUBLE  
THAN SHE'S WORTH!



went quickly from adviser to manager to wife, and just as quickly went Savage's climb up the rankings. At the time she came into his life, he had just joined the WWF, in 1985. By February of 1986 he had captured the Intercontinental title from Rick Steamboat. By the spring of 1988, he had captured the first of his two WWF World heavyweight crowns.

"The titles meant a lot to him," said his friend, "but what was most important to him was that he was finally wrestling up to his capabilities. With Elizabeth by his side, he really touched his potential, which is as much as any wrestler could ask for."

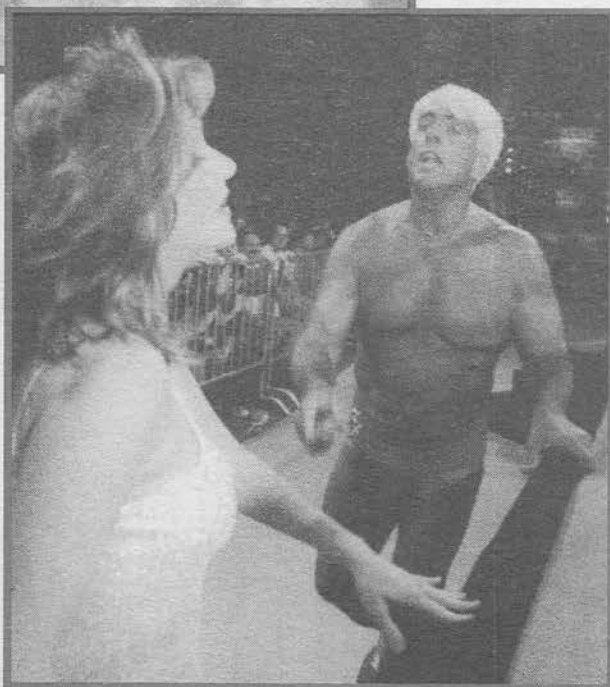
What exactly Elizabeth did was the subject of great debate. A few claimed that the curvy beauty was a strategic mastermind; others dismissed her as a bimbo love object Savage had simply gone gaga over. She rarely interfered in his matches. In fact, if you don't count whispering the occasional words of encouragement, she rarely spoke to Savage during his matches, or offered him insight, as most other managers do. Her job, it seemed, was to stand by, mannequin-like,

foundering, unable to silence the emotional demons that thwarted his career. His erratic behavior in and out of the ring made promoters reluctant to grant him title shots. When he did manage to get them, sometimes he'd succeed and win a regional title, but often his temper would get the best of him and cost him a big match.

All that changed when the angel-faced "adviser" known as Miss Elizabeth entered his life.

"He fell hard for her," his friend remembered. "He was a different man around her."

Elizabeth's job description



We never knew Liz was such a great actress. She acted distressed when Jimmy Hart restrained her in January (top left) and later pretended not to be interested in Ric Flair (left). Now we know her real motivation for returning to wrestling.







Elizabeth was a beaming bride when she and Savage exchanged vows at SummerSlam '91 (above), and she was often a source of inspiration for Savage and Hogan in the ring (right). Now she's bent on ruining both; that's a shame.



looking forlorn and beautiful. The only truth that mattered was that under her influence, Savage wrestled like a superstar.

When Elizabeth left him—their divorce turned into a tabloid-feeding frenzy—Savage remained competitive for a time, then took a job as Vince McMahon's announcing sidekick. Shortly after his second WWF World title reign ended, he was donning the wrestling tights only occasionally. His ranking in the "PWI 500" went from number two in 1992 to number 28 in 1993 to number 44 in 1994. Wrestling pundits interpreted that as the final shift in his tumultuous career.

But Savage wasn't done yet. Far from it. At the end of 1994, he bolted from the WWF and showed up in WCW. He was a full-time wrestler again!

Elizabeth, meanwhile, made infrequent special appearances around the country, but had, by 1995, all but disappeared from

the ring. When she re-appeared in January of 1996 by Savage's side, one question remained: Why? Savage had come full circle, capping another remarkable comeback by capturing his second WCW crown from Ric Flair. Did his ex-wife have a secret hand in the comeback?

"Not to my knowledge," said his friend. "When I saw her come out to the ring with him at the Clash in January, I was surprised as anyone."

The reason behind her presence was soon revealed. It was her shoe, which Ric Flair used to club Savage over the head at SuperBrawl VI in February, that would cost Savage his World championship.

"I've been waiting to do that for a long time," is all she would say afterward.

Savage would not comment.

Flair, meanwhile, was ecstatic. "That woman is an all-pro!" he bellowed later that night at his celebration. "Now she knows what it's like to be with a real man. She and I are going places, baby. We're gonna go in style!"

Hulk Hogan, himself the victim of an errant Elizabethan shoe several times in February, was quick to caution his arch-rival.

"Ric Flair is riding high now, brother," Hogan said. "He got the



belt, and he got the woman. But I've been down that road before. Elizabeth put a wedge between Randy and me a few years back. She ruined the greatest tag team of all-time. No one knows why she's back. All I know is she's dangerous now. And she has no business being near a wrestling ring anymore!"

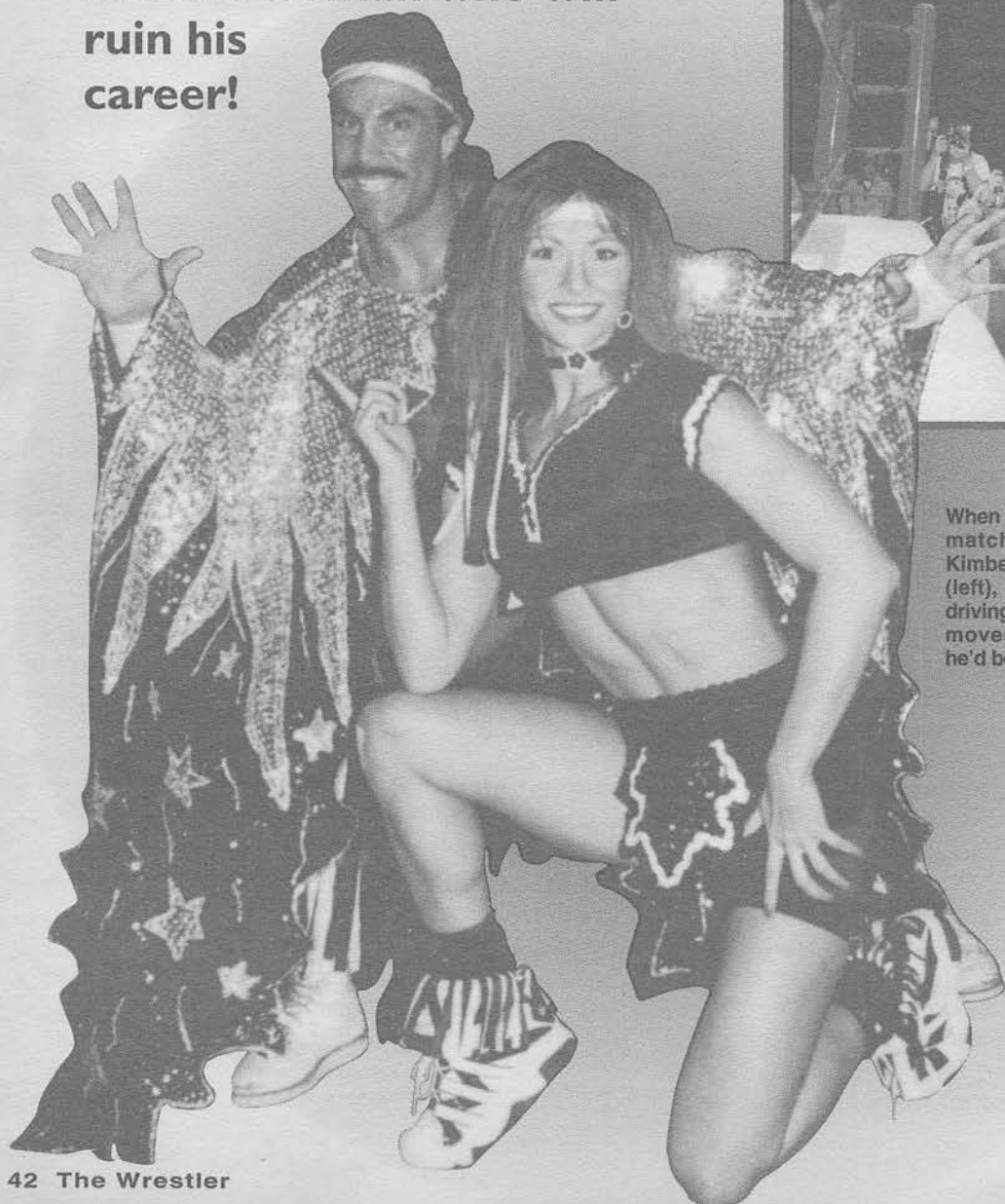
This last sentiment was echoed by Savage's friend. "She doesn't wrestle," he said. "She doesn't manage. She doesn't do anything except cause trouble. Why is she allowed around the ring in the first place?"

"I'll tell you, she's a beautiful dame, but that's all. She's a lot more trouble than she's worth!"

Savage learned that lesson too late. □

# KIMBERLY:

Shortly after he  
“won” Kimberly from  
“Diamond” Dallas Page in  
October, Johnny B. Badd said  
she was an inspiration to  
him. Now she’s looking more  
like the woman who will  
ruin his  
career!



When they pose together before a match, Johnny B. Badd and Kimberly look like a great team (left), but if it's Kimberly who's driving Badd to try more high-risk moves (above), then we think he'd be better off without her.

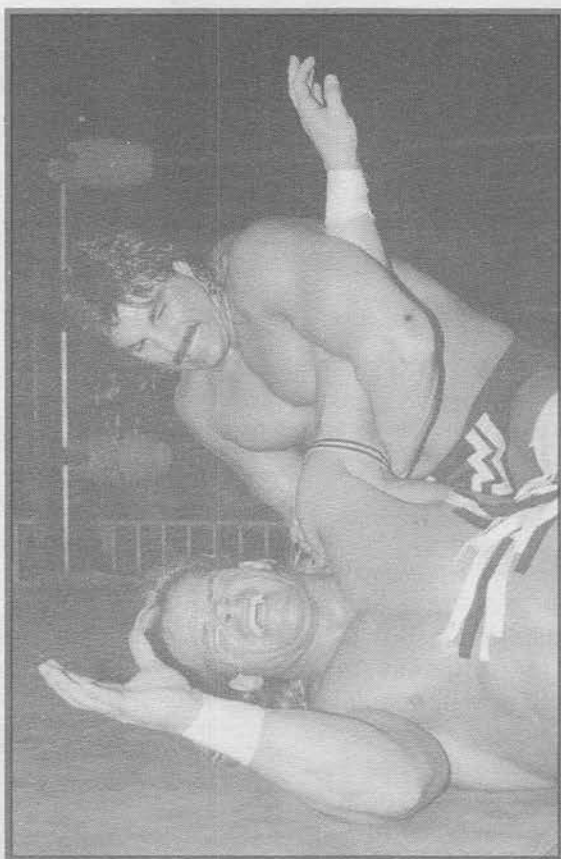


# SENDING JOHNNY B.

By Bryan Ethier

**P**ERCHED UPON THE top rope, and straddling the turnbuckle like a pirate upon the gangplank, Johnny B. Badd stood tenuously between glory and self-destruction. He gazed down into the ring at the crumpled form of Disco Inferno writhing in agony from a textbook Badd left hook.

*Should I finish this my usual top-rope sunset flip? Badd wondered. Or should I go for a flying headscissors? Or maybe a more daring aerial maneuver?*



Badd has made himself a fine aerial wrestler in the last few years. If, however, he's to be very successful, he needs to keep working on his mat skills, too, and not worry about impressing people, specifically Kimberly.

Badd glanced beyond the squared circle to the arena floor, where Kimberly, his valet and inspiration, watched him with eyes aglow. In that precious moment, their eyes met like grammar school sweethearts at Valentine's Day. "Impress me!" her eyes told his.

Suddenly, he was no longer just Johnny B. Badd. In this defining moment, which had slipped into slow-motion eternity, Johnny B. Badd was no longer just the WCW TV champion. He was a nubile diver poised upon a cliff overlooking the swirling Gulf of Mexico. Like that brave (or was it insane?) diver, Johnny B. Badd had no margin for error. To leap from the top rope and hit Inferno the wrong way could result in a serious injury, perhaps even paralysis.

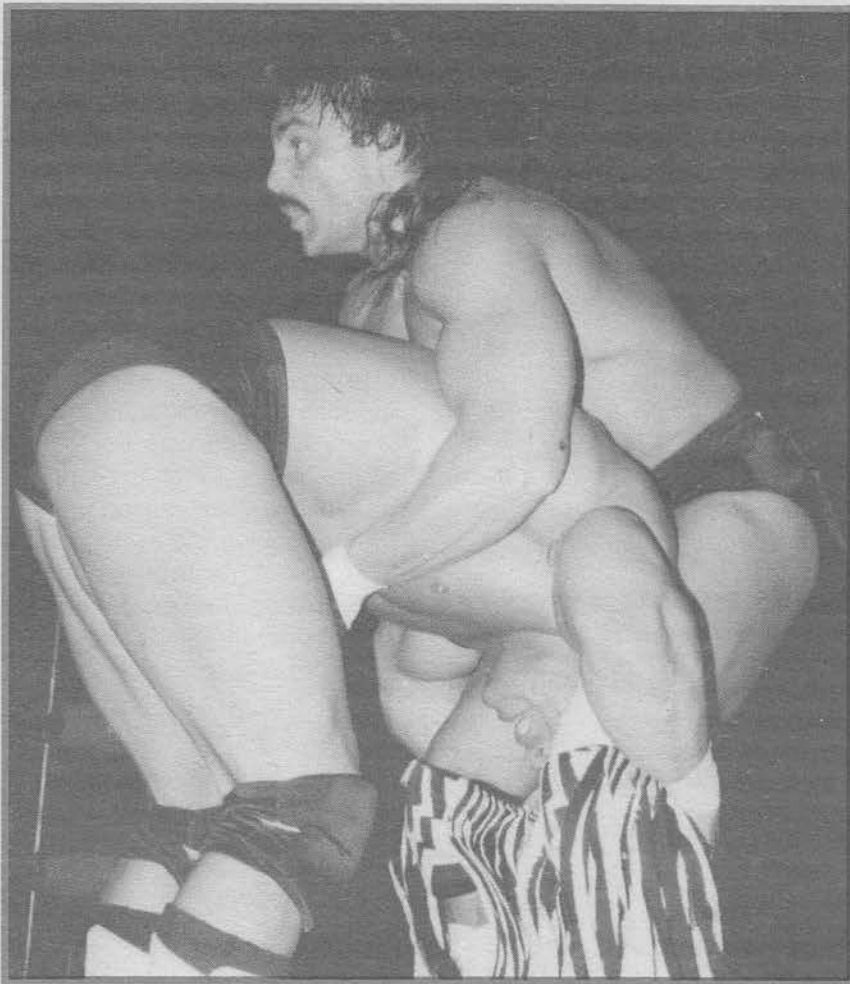
But it was the only way he could impress his Diamond Doll.

Johnny B. Badd shook his head to clear the cobwebs. His heart pounded in his chest, and he returned his attention to Disco Inferno, who was slowly pulling himself to his wobbly feet.

Badd knew he had to act immediately. He gave Kimberly a wink for luck. He bounced ever so slowly on the top rope, using the springing action like a diving board. Suddenly, he was airborne, hurling himself upward and outward. Tumbling and spinning. Then he was plummeting out of control toward Disco Inferno.

And in the fraction of a second before the two powerful wrestlers collided, Johnny B. Badd prayed he hadn't gone too

# OVER THE EDGE!



Johnny B. is no power bomb expert, is he? It could be that he figured trying this move would impress the lovely Diamond Doll. We'd advise him to stick to the moves that made him a champion in the first place.

far. He prayed he hadn't risked his body and his future simply to impress the lovely Kimberly ...

\*\*\*

It has been this way since October 29, when Johnny B. Badd beat "Diamond" Dallas Page at Halloween Havoc to win the WCW TV title for the second time. That was the night The Diamond Doll issued Badd her first "10," or a perfect mark, for his impressive victory over her then-boss.

From that moment henceforth, Badd has felt like an Olympic figure skater getting all perfect 10s for skating a daring, yet elegant long program. And since the WCW World War III pay-per-view in November, when Kimberly left Page and sided with Badd, WCW's acrobatic ex-

boxer has strived to earn all 10s from his new valet and source for personal and professional inspiration. For Badd fears that anything less than a perfect score will not suffice. Page, he knows, is always around and ready to reclaim Kimberly. And she recently told people she felt sorry for him and might return to his side.

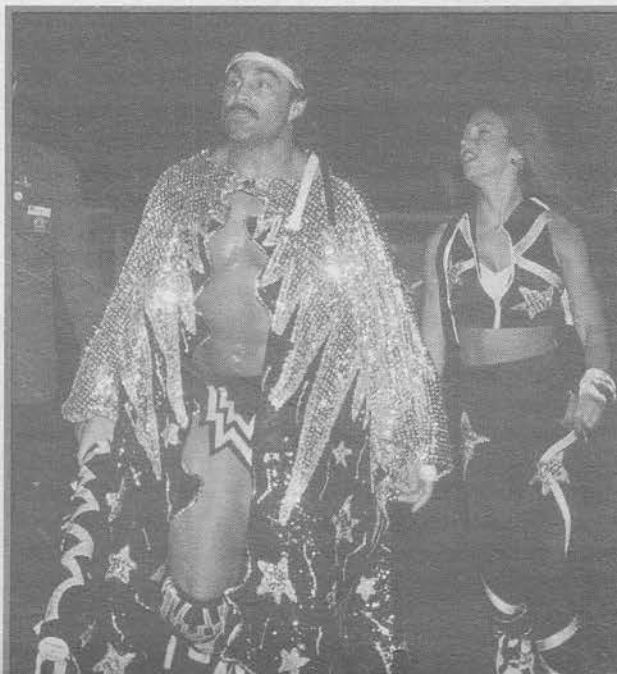
Consequently, to satisfy Kimberly's insatiable need for excitement, Badd has taken his aerial techniques to a new and dangerous level. If that means trying a double-somersault

out of the ring and onto a prone wrestler, he'll do it. No aerial maneuver is too dangerous or too frightening. If it means inventing new moves—moves he has no business trying—so be it.

"He is obsessed with showing off for her and impressing her," said Alex Wright, who also specializes in daring aerial maneuvers. "He feels he must earn her respect, but that does not make sense, because Johnny has treated her like royalty, and 'Diamond' Dallas Page always treated her like his possession. I don't know why he's so insecure around her. They seem to make a strong team, and she should respect him already."

Publicly, Badd has downplayed his relationship with Kimberly, saying his recent change in style is born from a "necessity to expand my repertoire of moves."

Said Badd: "You can't continue to use the same moves if you expect to stay on top. I am the WCW TV champion because I have been able to consistently surprise my opponents with outrageous and mind-boggling moves. Wrestling is like boxing. Opponents will train to defense your style. In a sport as wild as wrestling, one night I may have to be right-handed, then the next, I may have to fight as a

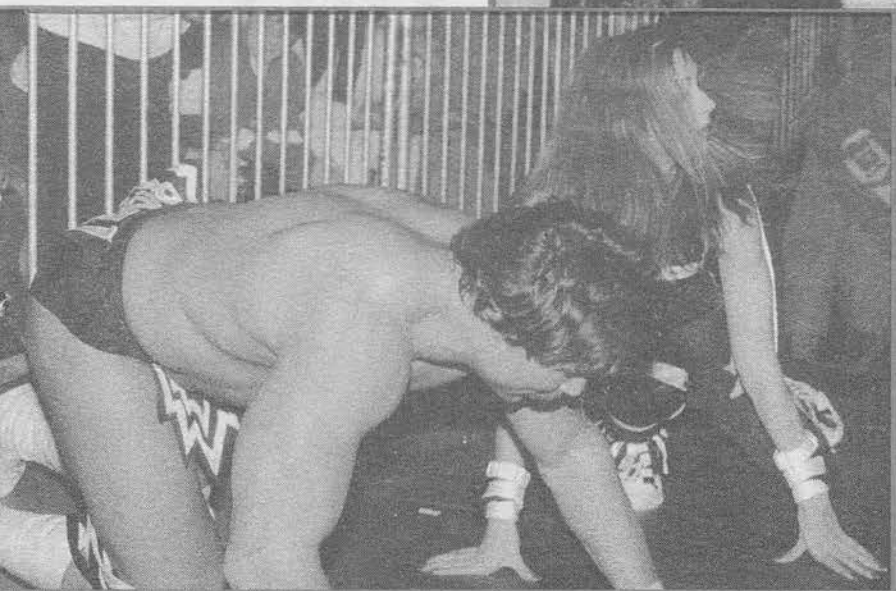




southpaw. The name of the game is to keep your opponent off-balance."

Despite his claim that he just wants to be a "more well-rounded" wrestler, the fact is that since Kimberly drifted into his world, Badd has wrestled more like Spiderman and less like a former boxer. Once an advocate of the axiom "You use what got you there," Badd seems more bent on satisfying his vanity and ego, and less on working toward the WCW U.S. or World heavyweight titles. Even his feud with Page has taken a backseat to his relationship with Kimberly.

"Granted, Johnny B. Badd is a good-hearted guy," said Brad Armstrong, a frequent WCW competitor. "But my concern is that he is taking this thing too far. He claims he'll wrestle anyone, any time. But has he? Since Kimberly entered the scene, he seems more concerned with looking good against lesser competition than risking a subpar performance against a top-notch wrestler. And you don't hear Kimberly complaining; she's not suffering financially. And as long as he keeps trying new and dangerous moves, she'll stay happy."



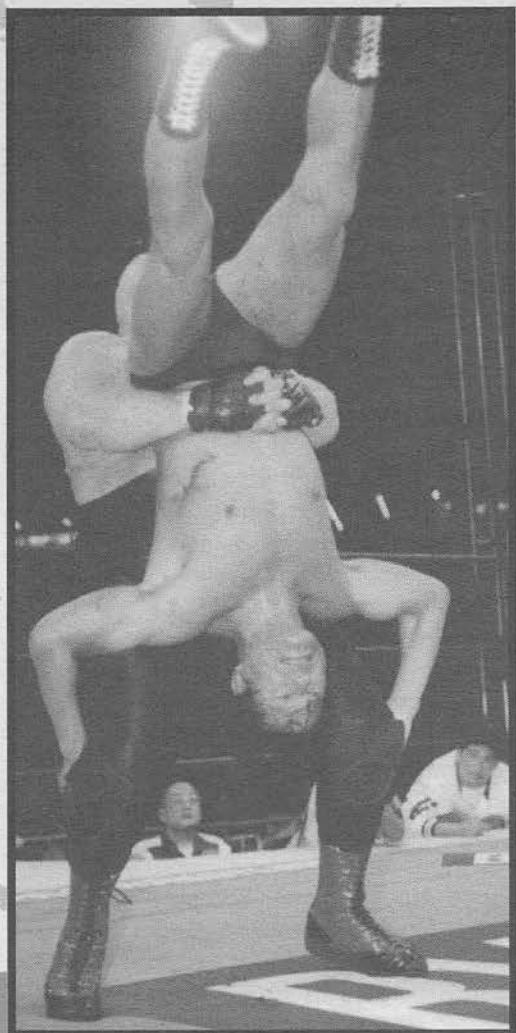
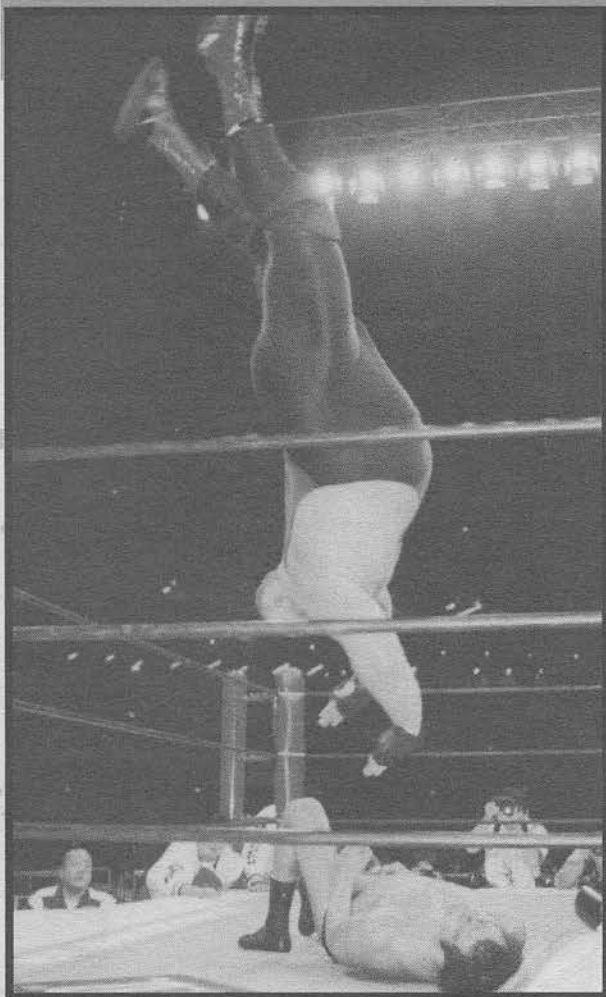
Every time he wrestles, Badd can expect Kimberly to stand by him as he walks to the ring (opposite page, left) and be there if he gets hurt during a match (above). But is her support worth the trouble she seems to be causing him?

"Diamond" Dallas Page wishes he could have the lovely Kimberly by his side, but it was Badd who rescued her from him back in the fall. Now there are rumors she wants Page back. Maybe Badd would be better off letting her go.

But will her happiness come at the expense of his career? Will Kimberly ultimately change Badd the wrestler into Johnny the leaping, diving, risk-it-all superhero?

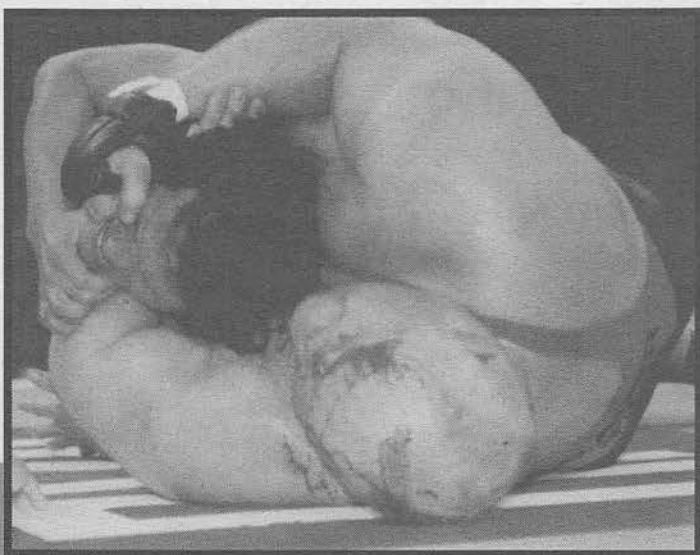
Only Johnny B. Badd and Kimberly know just how good—or just how destructive—their relationship is. □

# AFTER THIS ...



# AND THIS ...

Some may still doubt the greatness of Antonio Inoki, but Big Van Vader doesn't. Inoki removed all doubts with his fourth impressive victory over an American stars in the last two years—all of them coming since he turned 50!



# AND THIS ...

Photos by Koichi Yoshizawa



# INOKI

A black and white photograph of Antonio Inoki, a Japanese professional wrestler, celebrating a victory. He is shirtless, wearing dark wrestling trunks, and has his right arm raised high in the air. He has a determined expression on his face. The background is dark and out of focus.

IS  
STILL  
A WINNER!

By Chris Bernucca

**A** TRIVIA QUESTION: Who is the only wrestler who can claim victories over Lord Steven Regal, Sting, Ric Flair, and Big Van Vader in the last two years?

Hulk Hogan, you say? Hogan hasn't wrestled Regal one-on-one and hasn't beaten Sting. You also can discard just about every WWF wrestler, because none of them has faced Sting. Here are a few clues:

Think older. Think international. Think all-time great.

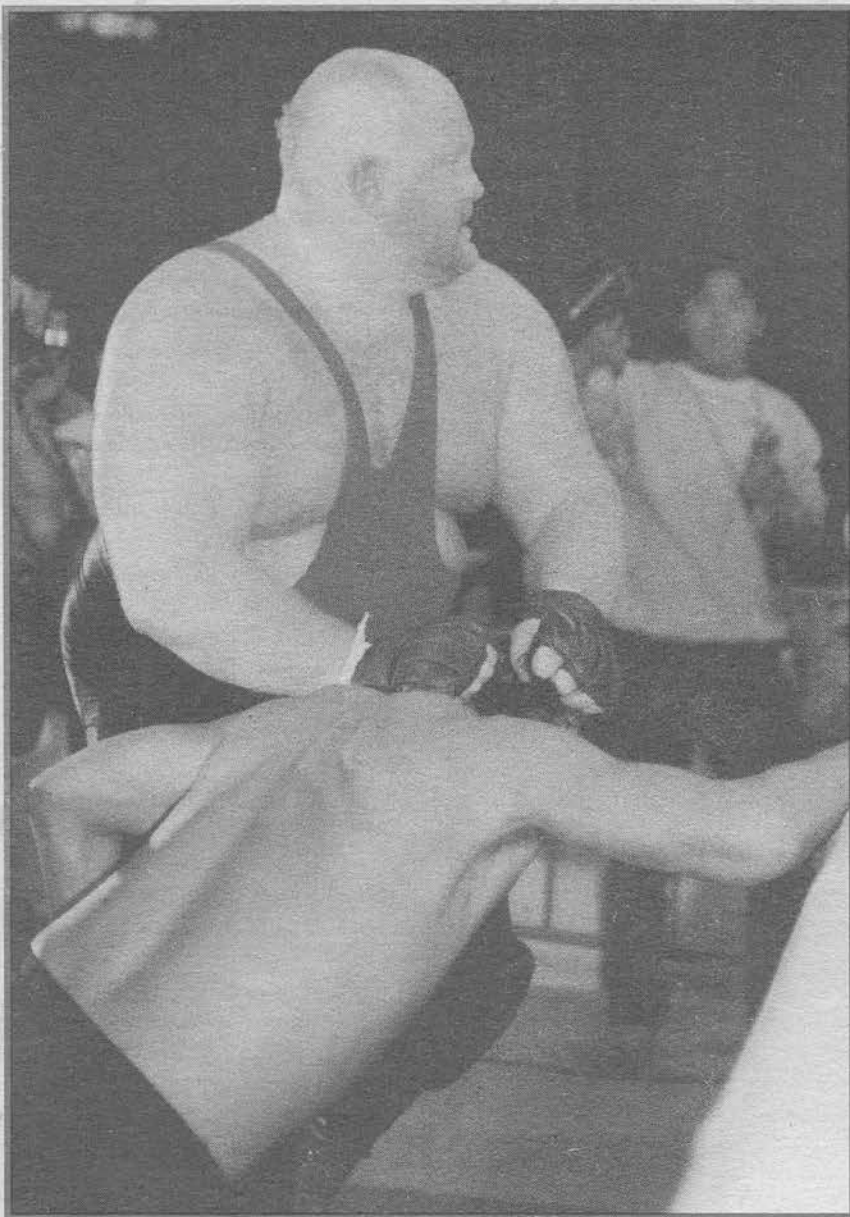
The answer is Antonio Inoki, who pulled off the last of his four remarkable victories on January 4 at the Tokyo Dome, where, despite taking a tremendous beating, he defeated Vader by submission.

"I don't understand why everyone makes such a big deal about it," Inoki said recently. "I hope that you would be making it just as big a deal if Vader had beaten me."

Probably not. There are rationalizations for a man in his 50s beating Regal, Flair, and even Sting. But Inoki's victory over Vader defied any logical explanation. It was based on sheer will and determination, coupled with considerable skill and experience.

"Perhaps you American writers look at it a bit differently because Vader is, to many, the most feared wrestler in your country," said *THE WRESTLER* Japanese correspondent Koichi Yoshizawa, who has developed a friendship with Inoki during his years in the sport. "But the reaction here was not one of surprise. Mr. Inoki fully expected to win, and I think many of the fans did as well. In big matches, when everyone and everything seems to be against him, there is no one better. He is our Hulk Hogan."

In front of more than 55,000 people, Inoki and Vader went at it for better than 14 minutes. For



Vader had his way with Inoki for most of the match and tossed him around at will outside the ring. But as he would later learn, Inoki is *never* out of a match until the final bell has rung.

about 12 of those minutes, Inoki looked every bit of his 52 years, while Vader looked every bit the wrestling beast he has become.

Vader—who had not wrestled since he was suspended from WCW in August 1995—was clearly dominant. Even in defeat, many observers acknowledged that it was one of his best matches. Vader adopted a brawling style that set the early tone for the match. He opened a cut under Inoki's eye. He moonsaulted onto him. He piledrived him. He dug his fingernails into Inoki's

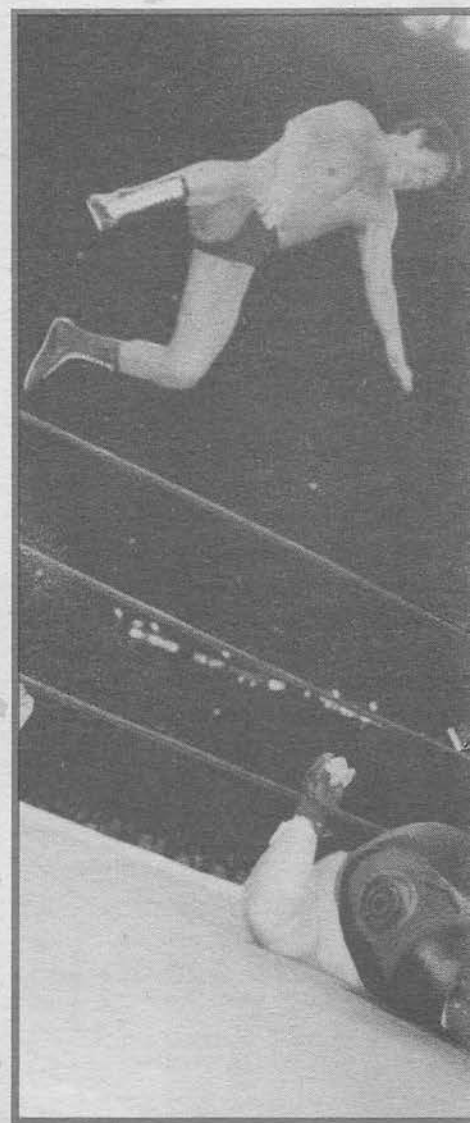
face. Later, he used a monster German suplex that saw Inoki's body fold like an accordion. The maneuver drew a collective wince of pain from the pro-Inoki crowd.

"I thought I had him there," said Vader, who has wrestled often in Japan and was not unfamiliar with Inoki's legendary status. "He looked like he didn't want to go on. Maybe I let up. I don't know. Looking back, I might have underestimated him from that point in the match."

Vader was looking to set up

Inoki for his vicious, debilitating power bomb, but he was never able to execute the finishing move. As sudden as a change in the wind, Inoki swayed the match in his favor. It is a trait inbred in all true champions, one that Inoki has displayed many times throughout his illustrious career.

Whatever had happened over the first 12 or so minutes of the match no longer meant a thing. Now Inoki was in control. He caught Vader with a few kicks and moves off the top rope. Finally, he executed a power-slam on Vader, then slapped on his armbreaker. The 450-pound behemoth made a quick decision that a loss on his record was





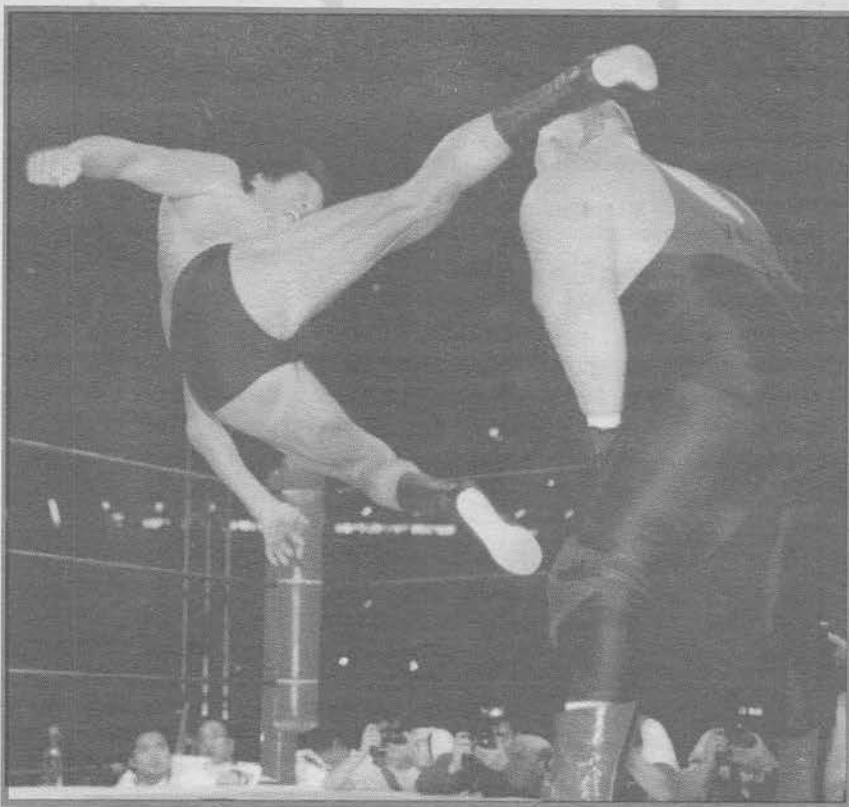
preferable to a broken arm. The submission came at 14:16, and the crowd roared in approval of Inoki's stunning victory.

"It doesn't matter how big or strong you are," Inoki explained afterward. "Unless you are a freak of nature, your elbow only bends so far until it locks. Your shoulder only rotates so far until it locks. Everyone, regardless of size, can be beaten with a submission hold."

"I knew that I would have a tough time pinning Vader. Besides his great size and strength, he also has excellent endurance and can absorb a lot of punishment. But I knew that he could be beaten with a submission hold. From the very beginning, that was my strategy."

Vader acknowledged that he had come up against a very smart wrestler.

"That's why he's Antonio



One of Inoki's favorite moves, the enzuigiri, served him very well in the Vader bout. On the other hand, Vader was unable to use *his* favorite move, the power bomb.



Once he did get Vader on the defensive, Inoki attacked him through the air (left) and even had the courage to take several punches at his face (above). Soon he had Vader set up for his armbreaker.

Inoki," he offered before traipsing off to the WWF. "He finds ways to win matches that appear to be unwinnable. Hey, he beat Flair and Sting, too. He was great tonight. I think if I got

another match with him, I'd beat him, but he was great tonight."

There are explanations for Inoki's wins over Regal, Sting, and Flair. He is similar to them in physical stature and at least as good a technical wrestler as all three. Factor in his experience in big matches and the fact that all three took place in front of pro-Inoki crowds and you get the recipe for success.

But the victory over Vader was truly something special for Inoki, who now must be acknowledged as one

of the all-time greats, along with Flair, Hogan, Lou Thesz, Bruno Sammartino, and whoever else anyone wants to throw into the mix. Given his advanced age in a sport dominated by young guns, Inoki's accomplishments

over the last two years are nothing short of incredible. It is safe to say that no wrestler has compiled a similar body of work while in his 50s. In fact, most wrestlers go their entire careers without four victories as impressive as these.

"I know many of you consider me the greatest Japanese wrestler of all-time," Inoki said. "I am appreciative of that. But in all honesty, I think you have to consider me one of the greatest wrestlers of all-time, regardless of my heritage. Over the last two years, I believe I have proven that."

Inoki is not bragging. He is a student of the sport's history and certainly is aware of his place in it. And for those who think he may be boasting, just consider what Vader had to say:

"It's no embarrassment to lose to Antonio Inoki," Vader said. "Hell, I'm just glad I got the chance to wrestle him before he retired." □

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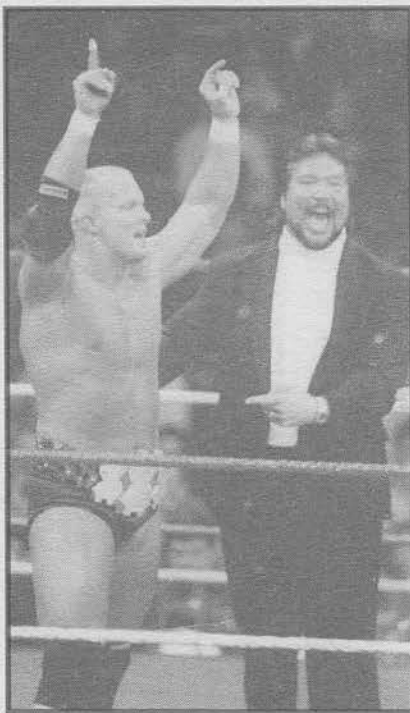
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# YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 5)



Ted DiBiase was once an outstanding wrestler himself, and he now has talented wrestlers like "Ring Master" Steve Austin and others in his Corporation, but that doesn't mean he's a great manager, argues reader Maria Dickinson.

Master" Steve Austin in his Corporation, but the only reason Austin has a belt (the "Million-Dollar" belt) is because DiBiase gave it to him.

DiBiase was one of the best wrestlers of his time. He and Steve Williams were one of the toughest teams in the world back in the UWF and Mid-South areas. He was a brilliant ring technician who was both feared and respected everywhere he wrestled. But just because he had a great career competing doesn't mean he knows how to properly transfer his knowledge into a strategy for his wrestlers. I'm sure he knows what to do, but I don't think he knows how to convey his thoughts to his wrestlers. Unless he learns how to do so, he may as well just liquidate his assets and cut his losses.

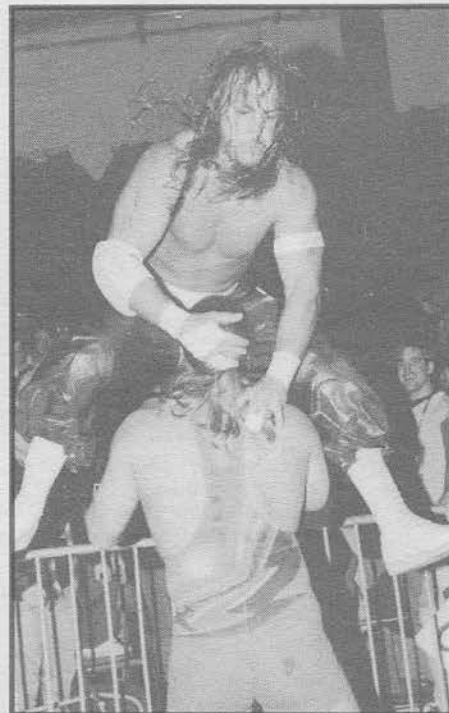
MARIA DICKINSON  
Cornwall, NY

## SABU'S DEATH WISH?

I've been to three ECW shows in the last three months, and I have to say that no wrestler has ever impressed me more than Sabu. I saw him against both Rob Van Dam and 2 Cold Scorpio, and I can't believe he hasn't suffered more serious injuries. I've seen him dive over the ropes and even over guard rails so many times, it's absolutely amazing. To me, it looks like he's always trying to show the fans a better move than he showed them the last time. That's dangerous, because one of these days he *is* going to get hurt real bad, and that will be the end of his career. I hope it never happens.

DON GARDNER  
Drexel Hill, PA □

Send YOUR LETTERS to:  
Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

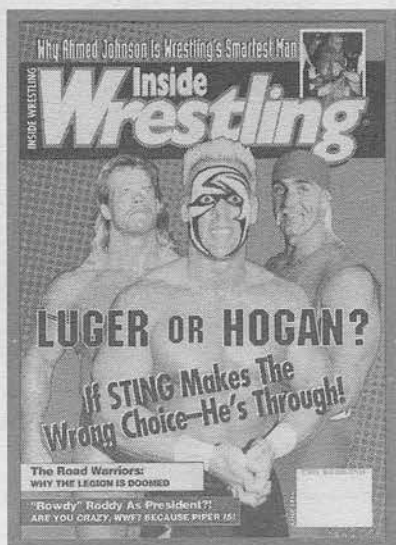


Sabu attacks Rob Van Dam during a recent ECW match. Reader Don Gardner (and many others!) thinks Sabu's ultra-violent, high-risk style will shorten his career considerably.



# THIS Month In...

## Inside Wrestling



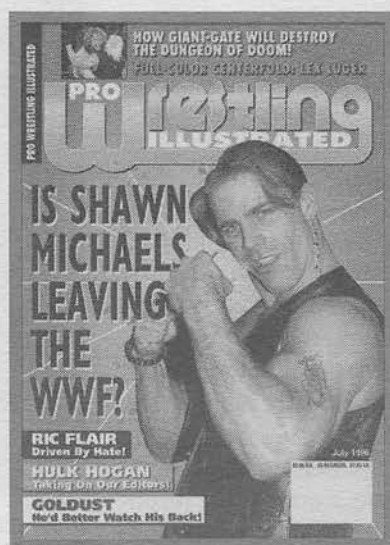
**STING** has a decision to make, a decision that will affect the rest of his life: Does he remain friends with **HULK HOGAN**, or **LEX LUGER**?

He must decide, and if he makes the wrong choice, he's through! ... Do you think the WWF was crazy to hire **RODDY PIPER** as its acting president? We do! ... Did **ANIMAL** come back too soon? Can **THE ROAD WARRIORS** climb to the top again? We'll tell you why this Legion is Doomed! ... The **YOKOZUNA-JIM CORNETTE** split sure was ugly; you won't believe what they said when we brought them together "One On One"!

All this—and much more!—  
in the June 1996 issue of  
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## PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED



The WWF-WCW war rages on, but could it be that **SHAWN MICHAELS** is leaving the WWF for WCW or, say, a career in acting? The answer could be greatly affect the sport's balance of power ... **THE GIANT** and **KEVIN SULLIVAN** aren't getting along so well. **STING** and **HULK HOGAN** were aware of that and decided to do something about it. Could The Giant be coming over to their side? ... We all know **GOLDUST** isn't too popular with the fans, but did you know that he's also unpopular with his fellow WWF wrestlers? Are they all plotting to destroy him?

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## WHAT'S HAPPENING

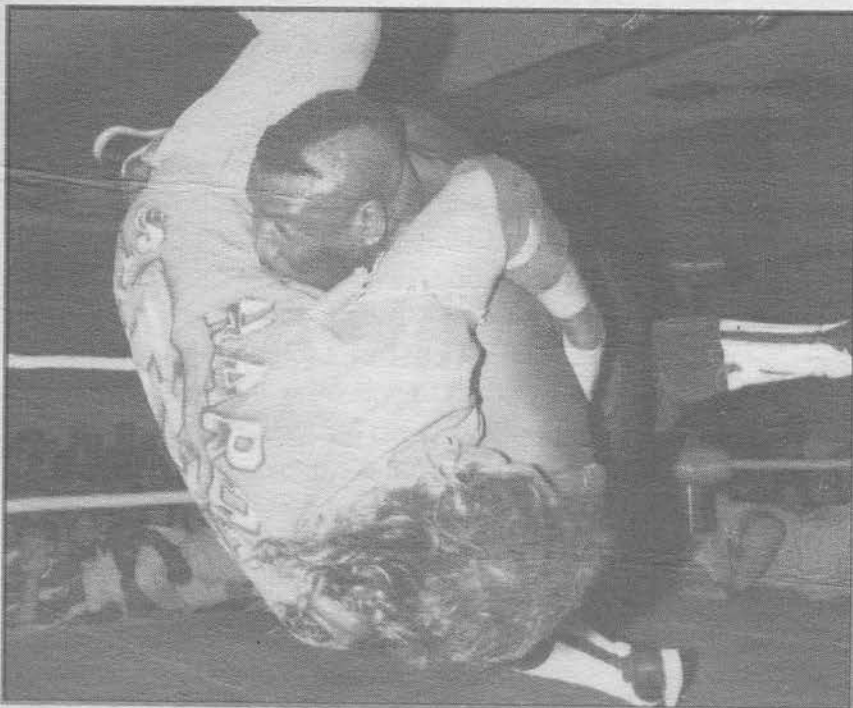
(Continued from page 7)

first round of the tournament, but Mo refused to do so because he did not want to damage their friendship. Mabel was given a forfeit victory over Mo.

**The Midnight Rocker**, who had been active in East Coast independents for several years, announced his retirement after suffering a serious back injury ... Newcomer **Hard Rock Hamilton**, who weighs in at 500 pounds and is competing in several East Coast independents, has one of the better powerslams I've seen in a long time. It's a great finisher ... 1994 Rookie of the Year **911** is now competing in the NWA and other independents, and he has made it clear to NWA promoter **Dennis Coraluzzo** that he wants a shot at **Dan Severn's** heavyweight title ... **The Brooks Brothers** have defeated **The Outlaws** for the Sunshine Wrestling Federation tag team belts ... **Gladiator II** won the Pro Wrestling Federation junior heavyweight championship from **Flaming Youth**.



Brian Pillman wasn't treated too kindly when he showed up unannounced at ECW Arena in February. Police officers threw him out of the building when he began acting in a lewd manner. Now he's threatening to take legal action.



When you weigh 500 pounds, you can put a whole lot of power into your power-slam. Young Hard Rock Hamilton (shown against Steve Smyth) has himself a great finishing move.

**Brian Pillman** is furious that he was handcuffed and ejected from the ECW arena for lewd behavior back in February, and he is now threatening promoters with legal action.

"I do what I want to do whenever I want to do it!" Pillman exclaimed. "To have me thrown out of the arena when I all I wanted to do was express my feelings about my WCW firing is ridiculous! The people who run ECW will learn through the legal process that what they did to me on that night will not be tolerated!"

"He can try anything he wants legally, but he will lose," said ECW President/Commissioner **Tod Gordon**. "I have videotape of him acting in a lewd manner in front of my patrons, and that will not be allowed in any of the arenas ECW promotes cards in!"

That's what's happening. I'll see you at the matches! □



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## NO HOLDS BARRED

(Continued from page 8)

was taken by how sweet, innocent, and quiet she seemed to be, especially since she was an aggressive pro wrestler (and, at that time, a rulebreaker).

She wasn't innocent at all, though. When she got in the ring, she was as tough and nasty as any woman wrestler.

Females in wrestling are an interesting group, and ECW has a fascinating collection right now, but most of them aren't nearly as lovely as some of the women who got involved in wrestling in the past.

Did I mention Cheryl Roberts, Jake Roberts' wife? The first time I saw her in person was when Jake was at an autograph session at a video store in Huntington, Long Island. The next time I saw her was at the WWF's Slammy Awards in Atlantic City around the time of *WrestleMania V*. She looked awesome. I couldn't place the face and figured she was a *Playboy* Playmate. Wrong. She was Jake's wife, and I'm glad I figured that out before making a move on her. Not that I would have done it, anyway.

Well, back to ECW and Missy Hyatt, who is hereby proclaimed Miss ECW. She remains the sexiest and most beautiful woman in wrestling, and the years have been very kind to her. I don't understand why The Sandman is calling her Mommy, and I really don't want to find out. I asked Missy about it before a recent card, and she just smiled. Missy rarely smiles these days, but she smiled that time. She also smokes and drinks beer. All you have to do is watch an ECW telecast and you'll see that.

Can you just see Missy Hyatt as a contestant on MTV's *Singled Out*? Can you imagine the kinds of questions she'd ask the guys vying for a date with her?

You know, it all comes back to Missy. Sure, Beulah McGillicutty's

very nice looking, and no man would be upset if she showed up at the door for a blind date. I'm sure Tommy Dreamer's having a great time with her. But compared to Missy? Sorry, it's no contest.

Then there's Francine, the woman who beats male wrestlers, or at least one male wrestler (Richards). Again, very nice-looking. Wears black, which is a plus if you ask some men. You wouldn't take her home to meet your mother, but then again, you wouldn't want to. I asked her what she likes most about a man, and she an-

swered, "His shoulders." I assume she meant pinned flat to the mat.

Kimona Wana-Laya. I don't believe the name is real, so I asked her if I could see her birth certificate or driver's license as proof. She just gave me a dirty look and walked away. Parents, please be more careful and considerate when naming your children.

Lady Alexandra. Good look. Very sexy.

But it all comes back to Missy Hyatt. Her return to wrestling makes every other woman look plain. □



Missy's main man is now The Sandman, maybe the most violent man in ECW. She seems to have some kind of strange hold over him, though, as he frequently refers to her as "Mommy."



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# CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

(Continued from page 14)

made his way to the ring for his match with Owen Hart. And when "The Heartbreak Kid" got there, Owen immediately rolled out of the ring and stood on the arena floor.

Hart knew he'd have to do something to quiet the crowd, and he did just that about three minutes into the match when he hit Michaels with a dropkick from the top rope. Sensing that he had momentum on his side, Owen fol-

knocked him down with a flying forearm smash.

When he leaped off the top rope toward Owen, though, he was caught with a kick to the stomach. Michaels then ducked Hart's attempted sidekick, connected with a superkick, and got the pin.

In other bouts: Steve Austin beat Savio Vega ... Brian Christopher beat Tatanka ... Yokozuna defeated Davey Boy Smith ...

Cactus appeared in jeans and a tie.

As a chant of "Mankind!" reverberated throughout the building, Douglas jumped Jack from behind. They brawled outside the ring for the first few minutes of the match, with each using a wooden crutch on the other. Douglas gained an advantage by suplexing Jack onto a metal railing, then catapulting himself into the crowd to attack him.

Somehow, though, Jack fought back. He knocked Douglas down with 10 consecutive forearm smashes and proceeded to lay a table on top of Douglas and elbowdrop it and him. But while Cactus was arguing with the referee, Douglas blasted him with a foreign object. Next he handcuffed Jack's hands behind his back and repeatedly bashed him with a chair. Still, Jack wouldn't give up, so Douglas applied a figure-four. While he was doing that, Mikey Whipwreck came into the ring and hit Jack with a chair. Douglas pinned his opponent while applying the leglock.

In other bouts: The Bad Crew & Dredd beat Dirt Bike Mike, Donn E. Allen, & Dino Sendoff ... Spiros Greco beat El Puerto Ricano ... Taz beat Joel Hartgood ... Bubba Ray Dudley beat Mr. Hughes ... The Bruise Brothers beat The Headhunters ... Axl Rotten beat J.T. Smith ... The Pit Bulls & Francine beat The Eliminators & Stevie Richards ... ECW heavyweight champion Raven beat The Sandman. □



Shane Douglas wasn't able to make Cactus Jack submit to a figure-four leglock in a brutal ECW match they had recently. He did, however, pin him after Mikey Whipwreck smashed Jack with a chair.

lowed that up with several kicks to Michaels' head. After raking Shawn's face along the top rope, Owen knocked him to the mat with a series of lefts and rights.

A camel clutch only added to "The Heartbreak Kid's" pain, and Owen got a two-count after kneeling Michaels in the stomach. Owen refused to let his popular foe any time to recover. Michaels did roll up Hart for a two-count, but Hart escaped the pin attempt and regained control by slapping on a chinlock. As soon as Shawn escaped that, though, he took over. He used an atomic kneedrop on Hart, punched him, then

Doug Gilbert & Tommy Rich beat Skip & Zip and Henry & Phineas Godwinn in a triangle match ... Duke Droese defeated The Kid ... WWF Intercontinental champion Goldust beat The Undertaker by disqualification ... WWF World champion Bret Hart beat Jerry Lawler in a steel cage match.

**Philadelphia, PA (Correspondent—Reggie Harris):** Cactus Jack wasn't in his usual wrestling attire when he came to the ring for his match with Shane Douglas at the ECW Arena. Explaining to the fans that he had attended a wedding earlier in the day,

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# YOU ASKED US

(Continued from page 16)

you seriously as an athlete because you're such a big man?"

—Randy Ramirez, Tulsa, OK

A: "I've had that problem for a long time," said Mabel. "People think all I can do is use my size to overpower my opponents, but they're wrong. So I just have to prove them wrong ... over and over. I know King Mabel is a great athlete. I'm strong, powerful, and I'm agile. Do you think just anyone can execute a legdrop perfectly? How about a flying dropkick, or a belly-to-belly suplex? I don't think so. Could I have won the King of the Ring last year if I wasn't a great athlete? Not a chance. But a lot of people still don't take me seriously. That's why I don't care what anybody thinks or says anymore. The only thing that matters is what *King Mabel* thinks!"

• • •

Q: "I have a question for Harlem Heat: You guys have been in WCW for a few years now, and you've won four WCW World tag team titles. Are you upset that



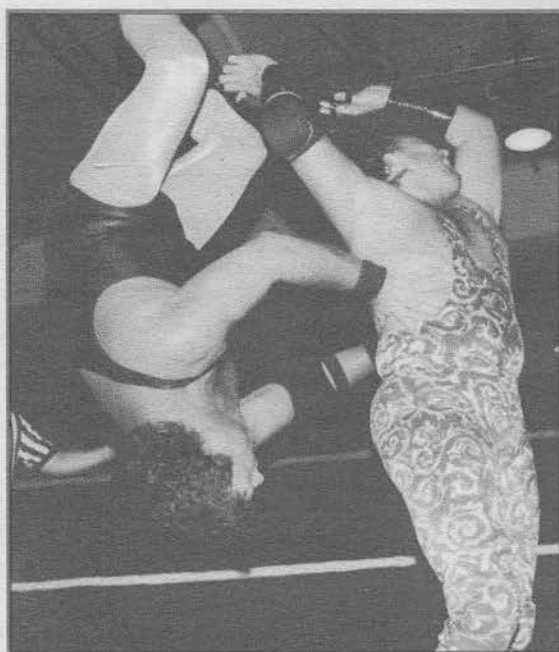
Stevie Ray legdrops Jerry Sags during a tag team match. Ray admits that he's upset that Harlem Heat, four-time former WCW tag team champions, have been pushed out of the spotlight by other tag teams in WCW.

some of the other tag teams in WCW have taken over the spotlight from you lately?" —Eric Bonin, Santa Rosa, CA

A: "You're damn right we're upset," said Stevie Ray. "We took out The Nasty Boys, The American Males, Bunkhouse Buck and Dick Slater, and a bunch of other teams, and what credit do we get? Nothing! Soon as The Road Warriors decide after all these years, they're *finally* ready to come back, we have to step aside for them. Luger and Sting can't even get along with each other, and they get more attention than us. That don't make sense to us! Everybody's talkin' about how bad Public Enemy is, too, and they just got here. We've seen them, and they're not as tough as us. Not even close. We're gettin' real sick of bein' pushed into the background around here. It means we're gonna have to get a little more aggressive. We're gonna turn up the Heat on a lot of people, and we don't care who doesn't like us!"

• • •

Q: "This question is for Doug Gilbert: You were in the 1996 Royal Rumble and you've wrestled several WWF wrestlers when the WWF came to the Memphis area? Would you like to wrestle there



Doug Gilbert has beaten Jerry Lawler several times on the independent circuit over the last few months; he'd like to wrestle "The King"—and other superstars—in the WWF some time.

full-time?" —Mark Haddoff, Louisville, KY

A: "I've dominated the USWA for a few years now," said Gilbert, "so I'm sure I could do the same in the WWF. I hear Jerry Lawler running his mouth on *Monday Night Raw* all the time, and I've beaten him, so I think I'd do just fine if I ever went there. Lawler's not the only one I beat, either. Me and Tommy Rich had a triangle match down here in Memphis against The Bodydonnas and the Godwinns a while ago, and we beat them both. I know I'm good enough to be great in the WWF, but I'm having a lot of fun causin' problems for Lawler and all his friends here in the USWA right now. Lawler better hope I don't chase him down in the USWA!" □

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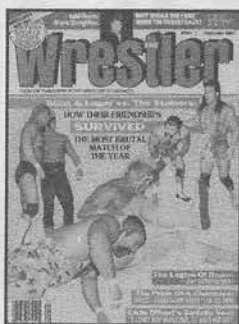
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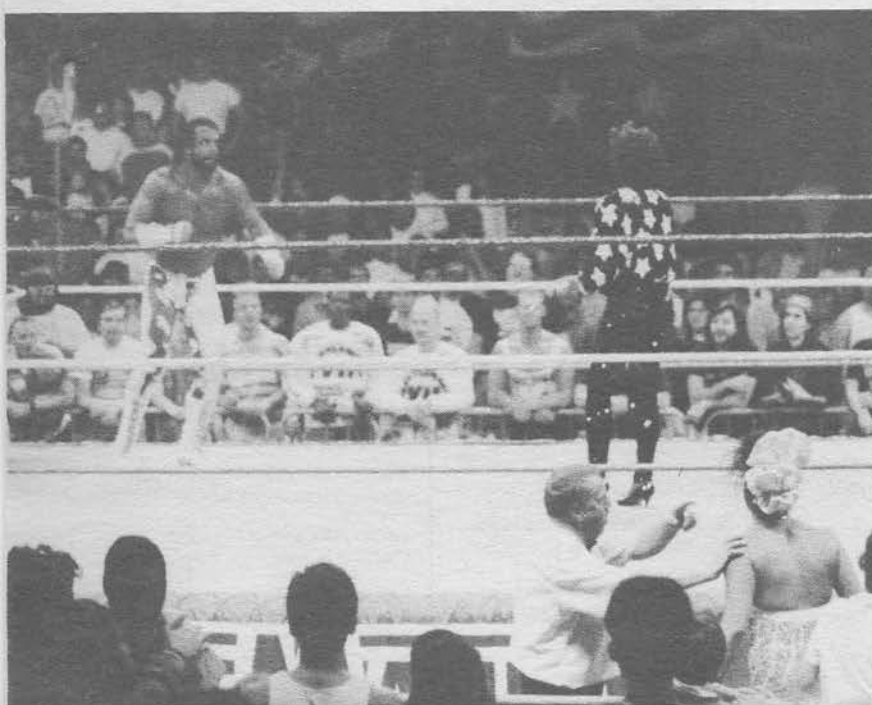
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By Bob Smith

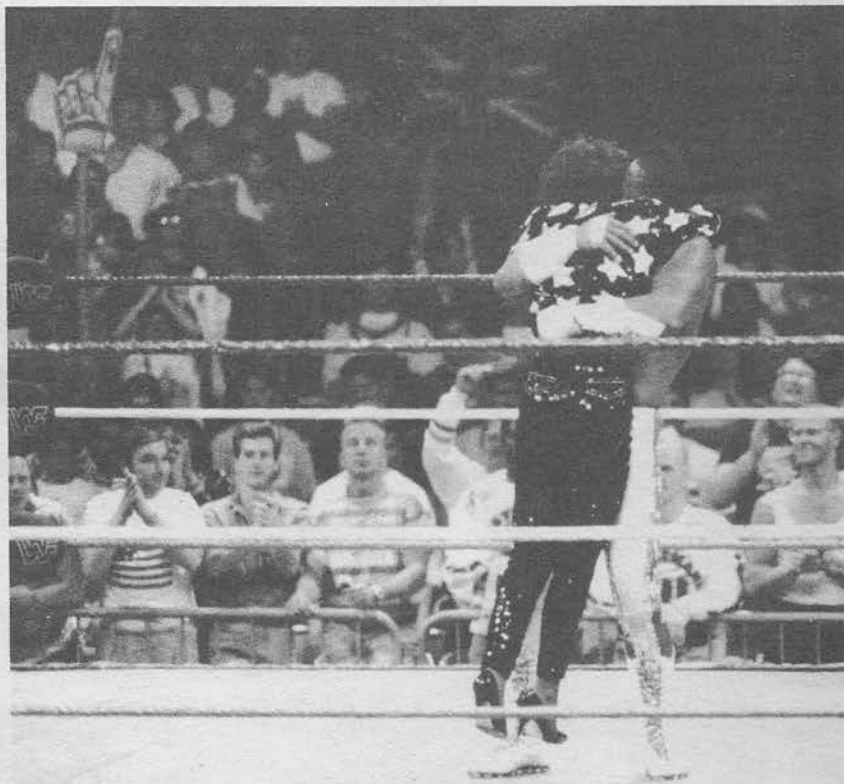
**T**HE WRESTLER'S EYES grew wide, not believing what they were seeing. Battered to the point of exhaustion, Randy Savage pointed his finger at the brave, frail woman who silently stood on the opposite side of the ring.



# Tears Of Joy: REUNION OF AND ELIZABETH

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Given the amazing events of the past few months in WCW, "bittersweet" is probably the *least* of the words we'd use to describe Elizabeth's return! Still, what happened between her and Randy Savage a half-decade ago bears timely rereading in this "*Wrestler Classic*" from our July 1991 edition!



Randy Savage at first was wary of Elizabeth's presence (far left). But when they embraced (above), all the mistrust seemed to fade away. It didn't seem to matter that Savage had just lost what was possibly a career-ending match.

"You!" ringside spectators claim Savage bellowed. "What are you doing here? What the hell is going on? Where did *you* come from?"

Across the canvas, the lovely Elizabeth, who had been completely out of the sport for a year, found it hard to contain her emotions.

"I'm sorry, Randy," Elizabeth was heard to meekly state. "I'm sorry you lost tonight. I'm sorry for *everything* that's happened to us."

The pair stared at each other for more than a minute, not knowing how to react to each other's presence. Haltingly, with tears streaming down her

face, Elizabeth fell into Savage's arms, and the strife and torment of the past was erased forever. This was an embrace that was felt not only by Savage and Elizabeth, but by millions of fans around the world.

After two years of denying what

Elizabeth had meant to him and his career, Savage finally reunited with the woman he truly cares for—*loves*—following his retirement-match loss to The Ultimate Warrior at WrestleMania VII on March 24 in Los Angeles. Savage was pinned by the Warrior following three crushing shouldertackles, which brought an end to more than 20 minutes of violent action—and also, apparently, to Savage's career.

The loss of Savage must be considered a crushing blow to the WWF. A former World and Intercontinental champion, Savage has established himself as the finest all-around wrestler in the federation. But even the prospect of Savage's departure from the WWF paled in importance to an even more significant story: Elizabeth was back in

Savage's life.

Savage can thank his *former* manager, the scurrilous Sensational Sherri, for forcing the reconciliation. After the Warrior scored the pinfall over Savage, the maniacal Sherri, fully aware that a significant source of income had been taken away from her, lost all control. She hurled referee Dave Hebner from the ring and kicked at the unconscious Savage's midsection. Screaming "loser!" over and over, Sherri began repeatedly ramming Savage's head into the canvas.

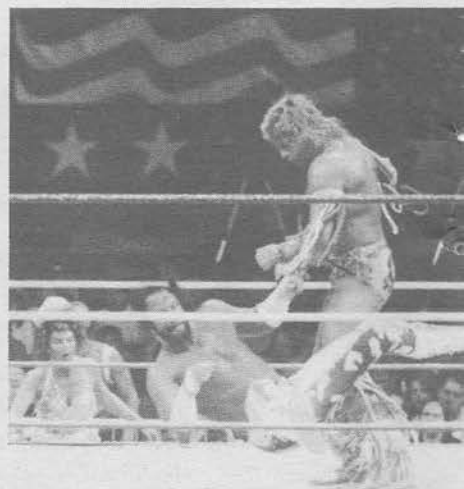
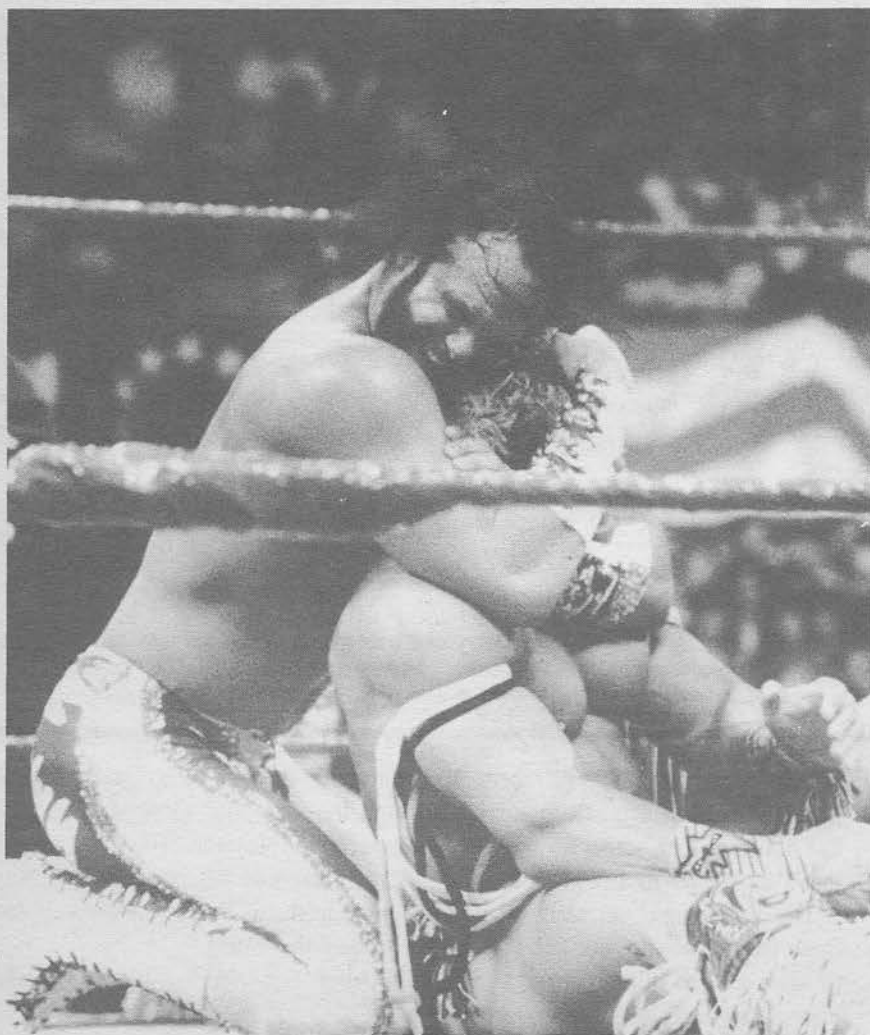
What Savage, Sherri, and the majority of the 15,000 fans at the Sports Arena failed to realize was that Elizabeth had purchased a second-row ticket. Overcome by emotion, Elizabeth climbed over the steel ring barrier and

ran into the ring. She grabbed Sherri by the hair and hurled her from the ring. Elizabeth had saved Savage—not only from Sherri, but from himself.

For Elizabeth, her actions were a complete turnaround from her stance of the previous two years. After his WrestleMania V loss to Hulk Hogan for the WWF World title, Savage callously dumped Elizabeth in favor of Sherri. Hurt and disgusted, Elizabeth vowed that she would gain a measure of revenge, even though in her heart she knew she still cared for Savage.

Elizabeth set out to publicly humiliate Savage. After leaving the sport for more than a year, she reappeared at WrestleMania VI, and her outside interference helped Dusty Rhodes and Sapphire defeat Savage and Sherri in a mixed tag team match. After the bout, Rhodes, Sapphire, and Elizabeth took part in a wild victory dance. On the outside, Elizabeth smiled and moved to the music. But inside, her heart was breaking.

Of everyone in the sport, only Elizabeth had seen the *real* Savage. She realized that deep down, if only she could get through to him, Savage was not the monster he had created through his frustration and thwarted



Savage fought well (left), but was eventually vanquished by Ultimate Warrior (above). When Sherri abandoned Savage, Elizabeth was there to comfort him, which points out the stark difference between the women.



ambition. She also realized that Savage was ruining his career by letting Sherri constantly interfere for him. Elizabeth struggled to find a way to get through to Savage, but repeated attempts at contact were met with indifference.

She wondered if she would ever get near a wrestling ring again.

"Elizabeth pretty much washed her hands of the sport," said Lanny Poffo, who watched his brother's situation from afar while tending to his own career. "I think she loved Randy, but he was just too bullheaded to see it. He was so obsessed with regaining the World title that he couldn't have cared less about anything else. The fool couldn't see happiness right before his own eyes."

Savage believed that as long as he had Sherri to interfere for him, he would eventually regain a championship belt. As Savage was struggling to remain in contention, however, Sherri's services were already being courted by Ted DiBiase. Elizabeth had not only cared about Savage's career, but also about his well-being. All Sherri ever cared about was herself.

Sherri proved her callousness by abandoning Savage in his greatest hour of need—but Elizabeth proved her caring by coming to Randy's aid when he had hit bottom. By saving Savage from Sherri, Elizabeth became the most important person in Savage's life once again. Instantly, she is back in place as Savage's manager.

But the manager of *what*? Despite Savage's appearance in several contractually obligated matches immediately after WrestleMania VII, his WWF career was effectively terminated with the loss to Warrior. Now Elizabeth faces her greatest challenge: finding a way to get Savage's career back on track.

That will, presumably, come in time. For now, Savage and Elizabeth are back together again. They're rediscovering the feelings of love and respect that brought them together in the first place. And both are happier than they've been in years.

Savage and Elizabeth are a team again. That's more than enough for now. ☐

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## BACK ISSUES

# THE Wrestler

## TOP 10

- 1 BRET HART**  
235, Calgary, Alberta  
(1) WWF World champion
- 2 STING**  
260, Venice Beach, CA  
(9) No. 2 contender: WCW World title
- 3 SHAWN MICHAELS**  
234, San Antonio, TX  
(5) No. 2 contender: WWF World title
- 4 RIC FLAIR**  
243, Minneapolis, MN  
(2) WCW World champion
- 5 GOLDUST**  
254, Austin, TX  
(7) WWF Intercontinental champion
- 6 THE UNDERTAKER**  
328, parts unknown  
(3) No. 3 contender: WWF World title
- 7 HULK HOGAN**  
275, Venice Beach, CA  
(6) No. 3 contender: WCW World title
- 8 RANDY SAVAGE**  
237, Sarasota, FL  
(4) No. 5 contender: WCW World title
- 9 LEX LUGER**  
265, Chicago, IL  
(-) WCW TV champion
- 10 SAVIO VEGA**  
260, Vega Alta, Puerto Rico  
(-) No. 4 contender: WWF World title



Savio Vega

## TAG TEAMS

- 1 HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN**  
Combined weight: 531 pounds  
(4) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 2 LEX LUGER & STING**  
Combined weight: 525 pounds  
(1) WCW World tag team champions
- 3 THE ROAD WARRIORS**  
Combined weight: 560 pounds  
(3) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 4 SKIP & ZIP**  
Combined weight: 446 pounds  
(2) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 5 RICK & SCOTT STEINER**  
Combined weight: 483 pounds  
(-) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 6 THE ELIMINATORS**  
Combined weight: 459 pounds  
(8) ECW tag team champions
- 7 DOUG GILBERT & TOMMY RICH**  
Combined weight: 489 pounds  
(-) USWA tag team champions
- 8 PUBLIC ENEMY**  
Combined weight: 583 pounds  
(10) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 9 OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH**  
Combined weight: 472 pounds  
(9) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 10 THE PIT BULLS**  
Combined weight: 551 pounds  
(-) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title

## WCW

### World Champion:

#### RIC FLAIR

(C) 243, Minneapolis, MN

- 1—KONNAN**  
(1) 237, Mexico City, Mexico
- 2—STING**  
(5) 260, Venice Beach, CA
- 3—HULK HOGAN**  
(3) 275, Venice Beach, CA
- 4—LEX LUGER**  
(7) 265, Chicago, IL
- 5—RANDY SAVAGE**  
(2) 237, Sarasota, FL
- 6—THE GIANT**  
(4) 430, parts unknown
- 7—ARN ANDERSON**  
(8) 249, Minneapolis, MN
- 8—EDDY GUERRERO**  
(-) 221, Los Angeles, CA
- 9—HACKSAW DUGGAN**  
(-) 280, Glens Falls, NY
- 10—ALEX WRIGHT**  
(10) 222, Berlin, Germany

## WWF

### World Champion:

#### BRET HART

(C) 235, Calgary, Alberta

- 1—GOLDUST**  
(1) 254, Austin, TX
- 2—SHAWN MICHAELS**  
(3) 234, San Antonio, TX
- 3—THE UNDERTAKER**  
(2) 328, parts unknown
- 4—SAVIO VEGA**  
(9) 260, Vega Alta, Puerto Rico
- 5—YOKOZUNA**  
(5) 589, Samoa
- 6—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY**  
(-) 279, Greenwich, CT
- 7—AHMED JOHNSON**  
(4) 255, Pearl River, MS
- 8—STEVE AUSTIN**  
(6) 241, Dallas, TX
- 9—JUSTIN BRADSHAW**  
(-) 309, Roscoe, TX
- 10—OWEN HART**  
(-) 227, Calgary, Alberta

## USWA

### USWA Champion:

#### JERRY LAWLER

(C) 234, Memphis, TN

- 1—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**  
(1) 230, Memphis, TN
- 2—MABEL**  
(-) 568, Harlem, NY
- 3—J.J. ARMSTRONG**  
(8) 240, Marietta, GA
- 4—TRACEY SMOTHERS**  
(7) 227, Atlanta, GA
- 5—SPELLBINDER**  
(6) 273, parts unknown
- 6—DOUG GILBERT**  
(2) 241, Lexington, TN
- 7—MO**  
(-) 285, Harlem, NY
- 8—TOMMY RICH**  
(5) 248, Hendersonville, TN
- 9—DR. ISAAC YANKEM**  
(-) 345, Knoxville, TN
- 10—BILL DUNDEE**  
(-) 219, Melbourne, Australia

## ECW

### ECW Champion:

#### RAVEN

(C) 235, Short Hills, NJ

- 1—SHANE DOUGLAS**  
(2) 223, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2—2 COLD SCORPIO**  
(4) 222, Denver, CO
- 3—SABU**  
(3) 220, Bombay
- 4—THE SANDMAN**  
(1) 244, Philadelphia, PA
- 5—TOMMY DREAMER**  
(-) 245, Yonkers, NY
- 6—CHRIS JERICHO**  
(-) 225, Vancouver, BC
- 7—TAZ**  
(6) 221, Red Hook, NY
- 8—REY MISTERIO JR.**  
(-) 140, San Diego, CA
- 9—STEVIE RICHARDS**  
(-) 227, Philadelphia, PA
- 10—AXL ROTTEN**  
(10) 302, Philadelphia, PA



# OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue, while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

## MOST POPULAR

- 1 SHAWN MICHAELS**  
234, San Antonio, TX  
Last issue: No. 1 Most Popular
- 2 STING**  
260, Venice Beach, CA  
Last issue: No. 4 Most Popular
- 3 THE UNDERTAKER**  
328, parts unknown  
Last issue: No. 3 Most Popular
- 4 RODDY PIPER**  
247, Glasgow, Scotland  
Last issue: No. 8 Most Popular
- 5 RANDY SAVAGE**  
237, Sarasota, FL  
Last issue: No. 9 Most Popular
- 6 BRET HART**  
235, Calgary, Alberta  
Last issue: No. 6 Most Popular
- 7 HULK HOGAN**  
275, Venice Beach, CA  
Last issue: No. 2 Most Popular
- 8 YOKOZUNA**  
589, Samoa  
Last issue: No. 10 Most Popular
- 9 AHMED JOHNSON**  
255, Pearl River, MS  
Last issue: No. 5 Most Popular
- 10 BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**  
230, Memphis, TN  
Last issue: unrated

## MOST HATED

- 1 GOLDUST**  
254, Austin, TX  
Last issue: No. 3 Most Hated
- 2 BIG VAN VADER**  
450, Denver, CO  
Last issue: No. 2 Most Hated
- 3 RIC FLAIR**  
243, Minneapolis, MN  
Last issue: No. 1 Most Hated
- 4 DIESEL**  
356, Las Vegas, NV  
Last issue: unrated
- 5 BRIAN PILLMAN**  
226, Cincinnati, OH  
Last issue: unrated
- 6 KEVIN SULLIVAN**  
252, Boston, MA  
Last issue: No. 4 Most Hated
- 7 THE KID**  
212, Minneapolis, MN  
Last issue: unrated
- 8 ARN ANDERSON**  
249, Minneapolis, MN  
Last issue: No. 8 Most Hated
- 9 THE GIANT**  
430, parts unknown  
Last issue: No. 6 Most Hated
- 10 LEX LUGER**  
265, Chicago, IL  
Last issue: No. 7 Most Popular

For period ended March 19, 1996

## CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of these issues in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only, and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a first-place rating, nine for second place, and so on. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, with a possible maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

### SINGLES

- |                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| 1—BRET HART .....    | 67 points |
| 2—DIESEL .....       | 62 points |
| 3—HULK HOGAN .....   | 61 points |
| 4—STING .....        | 58 points |
| 5—RANDY SAVAGE ..... | 54 points |

### TAG TEAMS

- |                              |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| 1—HARLEM HEAT .....          | 67 points |
| 2—THE SMOKIN' GUNNS .....    | 66 points |
| 3—OWEN HART & YOKOZUNA ..... | 57 points |
| 4—PG-13 .....                | 36 points |
| 5—SKIP & ZIP .....           | 32 points |

## NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:

**NOBUHIKO TAKADA**

(C) 231, Yokohama, Japan

- 1—THE GREAT MUTA**  
(4) 245, Tokyo, Japan
- 2—SHINYA HASHIMOTO**  
(6) 287, Gisu, Japan
- 3—JUSHIN LIGER**  
(1) 206, Hiroshima, Japan
- 4—SHIRO KOSHINAKA**  
(-) 225, Tokyo, Japan
- 5—KENSUKE SASAKI**  
(5) 233, Tokyo, Japan
- 6—MASA CHONO**  
(-) 235, Tokyo, Japan
- 7—SCOTT NORTON**  
(10) 360, Minneapolis, MN
- 8—EL SAMURAI**  
(-) 210, Tokyo, Japan
- 9—HIROYOSHI TENZAN**  
(-) 270, Tokyo, Japan
- 10—KOJI KANEMOTO**  
(2) 205, Tokyo, Japan

## ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:

**MITSU HARU MISAWA**

(C) 228, Saitama, Japan

- 1—TOSHI AKI KAWADA**  
(1) 245, Tizhigi, Japan
- 2—KENTA KOBASHI**  
(3) 261, Tokyo, Japan
- 3—AKIRA TAUE**  
(2) 265, Tokyo, Japan
- 4—STAN HANSEN**  
(-) 322, Borger, TX
- 5—GARY ALBRIGHT**  
(6) 343, Billings, MT
- 6—JOHNNY ACE**  
(5) 250, San Bernadino, CA
- 7—YOSHINARI OGAWA**  
(4) 202, Fichigi, Japan
- 8—THE PATRIOT**  
(9) 251, Columbia, SC
- 9—DAN KROFFAT**  
(-) 232, Montreal, Quebec
- 10—SHOHEI BABA**  
(8) 283, Niigata, Japan

AAA: AAA Champion—Konnan; 1—Perro Aguayo; 2—Pierroth Jr.; 3—Rey Misterio Jr.; 4—Juventud Guerrera; 5—La Parka; 6—Pscosis; 7—Cien Caras; 8—Octagon; 9—Zibernetico; 10—Heavy Metal.

ACW: ACW Champion—T. Rantula; 1—Johnny Gunn; 2—Tito Santana; 3—Virgil; 4—Rick Martel; 5—Johnny Graham; 6—Frank Stalletto; 7—Mr. Hughes; 8—Lord Zoltan; 9—Glen Osbourne; 10—Ubas.

MTW: MTW Champion—Title Vacant; 1—Bruiser Bedlam; 2—D-Lo Brown; 3—Rock Stevens; 4—Chris Carter; 5—Machine Gun Kelly; 6—Johnny Paradise; 7—J.T. Lightning; 8—Bobo Brazil Jr.; 9—Brad Armstrong; 10—Ray Roberts.

PCW: PCW Champion—Akita Kaos; 1—Skip; 2—Jimmy Deo; 3—Ray Odyssey; 4—D-Lo Brown; 5—Primo Carnera III; 6—Reckless Youth; 7—King Kong Bundy; 8—Maxx Crimson; 9—Mark Mest; 10—Johnny Graham.

PWA: PWA Champion—The Hater; 1—Kamikaze Kid; 2—J.B. Trask; 3—Horace the Psychopath; 4—Lenny Lane; 5—Dan Jessor; 6—The Mangler; 7—Nailz; 8—Charlie Norris; 9—Blacktop Bully; 10—The Nightstalker.

PWF: PWF Champion—Rick Morton; 1—Italian Stallion; 2—George South; 3—Russian Assassin II; 4—Gladiator II; 5—Madd Maxxine; 6—Austin Steele; 7—Cruel Connection II; 8—Star Ryder; 9—Flaming Youth; 10—Chris Hamrick.

# Ratings

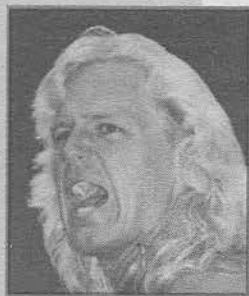
## ANALYSIS

**A major WCW coup?** Absent from this month's WWF ratings is **Diesel**, and as you know from reading the lead item in Bill Apter's "What's Happening" column on page six, "Big Daddy Cool" won't be making many more appearances in our WWF ratings. He's off to WCW this summer, and he could be taking **Razor Ramon** with him.

Ramon is not in the ratings because he was in the middle of a six-week suspension when we went to press. Diesel, on the other hand, was out of action for a while due to a shoulder injury he suffered in the steel cage match with **Bret Hart** at In Your House VI in February.

There are unconfirmed rumors going around that other WWF superstars are being wooed by WCW and could be jumping ship, too, but right now, they are just that—unconfirmed rumors. Still, if WCW does get both Diesel and Ramon—and there's a good chance that will happen—it will be a great boost to the already loaded WCW talent roster.

**And another injury ...** Jeff Jarrett's name has disappeared from our ratings completely. That's



Jeff Jarrett

because he suffered a fairly serious back injury in a match against **Ahmed Johnson** in February. At press time, no one in Jarrett's camp would say exactly how long he'd be out of action. A spokesman for "Double-J" did say that he initially hurt his back about a year ago while lifting weights, and that what happened against

Johnson was a reaggravation of that same injury. Because of the injury, Jarrett had to vacate the USWA heavyweight title, which was subsequently won by **Jerry Lawler** in a tournament.

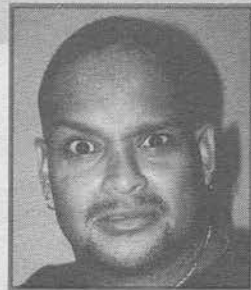
**This 'n' that ...** Mabel and Mo are both competing only occasionally in the WWF these days; you can see them more regularly on the independent circuit, and both are now in the USWA rankings individually. Mabel has vowed that he will win the USWA heavyweight title from Lawler, while Mo is pursuing the USWA Southern belt, which was held at press time by **Brian Christopher**.

**PG-13—Wolfie D and J.C. Ice**—have left the USWA. They lost a "loser-leaves-the-USWA" match to tag team champions **Doug Gilbert** and **Tommy**

**Rich** in early-March. They do not appear in our tag team rankings in this issue because as of press time, they had not yet joined another promotion.

As hated as **Brian Pillman** is around the wrestling world, he is not ranked in ECW or any other promotion because he wasn't actually wrestling when we went to press. After Pillman left WCW in February, ECW promoters initially agreed to let him wrestle a series of matches in their promotion, but because he has acted in such a lewd manner during his appearances in ECW, they were reportedly having second thoughts about letting him wrestle.

**Savio Vega** is quietly making some headway in our WWF ratings. The Puerto Rico native got off to an impressive start when he joined the WWF in the spring of 1995, but he had started to struggle toward the end of the year. Then he was granted series of matches against Intercontinental champion **Goldust**. Though he suffered a few losses to Goldust, Savio did beat him by countout a few times, too. In fact, he had Goldust so frustrated a few times that the champion just took his belt and headed for the locker room.



Savio Vega

Don't be shocked if Savio wins the I-C belt sometime this year. He's a very good athlete who possesses outstanding martial arts skills.

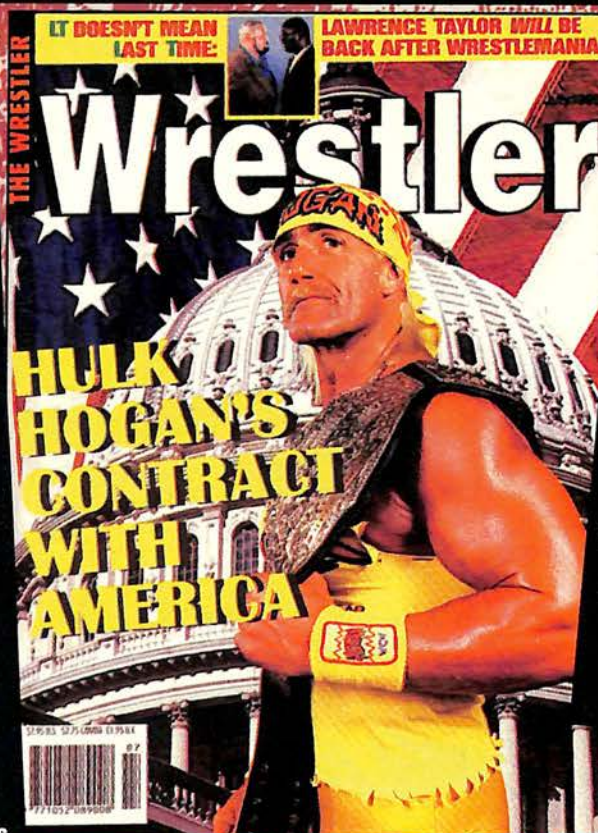
And, finally, we wouldn't want to end this column without at least mentioning **The Booty Man**. Yes, he is zooming up the WCW rankings now that he is back in the good graces of **Hulk Hogan**. You might know Booty better as **Brutus Beefcake**, **The Barber**, **The Butcher**, **The Man With No Name**, or **Zodiac**, but because we don't know what name he's going to use next, we're still just referring to him as Brutus Beefcake in the ratings. Let's hope this is it for the name changes, and let's hope he remains a fan favorite. □

**Until next month ...** If you have any questions or comments relating to our ratings or what you see on this page, we want to hear them. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o THE WRESTLER, Box 1148,



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